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ABSTRACT

This document presents the most current and complete information about charter schools in Wisconsin. It describes the purpose of charter schools in the state and how they are constructed to achieve their goals. It discusses charter-school history, sponsorship, legal status, what charter schools can and cannot do, organization and governance, teaching requirements, funding, and accountability. The publication examines all 34 charter schools in Wisconsin. Each profile features the name and address of the school, the school district, and the district administrator. Tables of enrollment data are featured for 17 of the schools, all of which opened prior to 1998. The tables compare the charter school to its school district and include information on the 1997-98 student population, grades and total enrollment, and gender and race of students. Tables also provide numbers of students who are at-risk, learning disabled, emotionally disturbed, physically handicapped, and receiving free or reduced-price lunch. The overviews examine issues of technology, work experience, personal and social development, employability, basic philosophies, academics, advisory services, core knowledge, and team teaching. Comparative information on charter schools offers insights on curriculum/instruction programs, populations and locations, schedules, and administrative information. Four appendices give further information on charter-school law and other matters. (RJM)

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Wisconsin Charter Schools

1998

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Contents

Foreword v
Introduction vii

1. Wisconsin Charter Schools State Summary
History 2
Sponsorship 2
Legal Status 2
What Charter Schools Can and Cannot Do 2
Organization and Governance 3
Teaching Requirements 3
Funding 4
Accountability 4

2. Wisconsin Charter Schools
Appleton Central Alternative School 6
Beaver Dam Charter School 8
Deerfield Charter High School 10
McKinley Charter School, Eau Claire 12
The Brompton School, Kenosha 14
Paideia Academy, Kenosha 16
School of Technology and Arts (SOTA), La Crosse 18
School of Technology and Arts II (SOTA II), La Crosse 20
Ladysmith Evening Alternative School 22
Affiliated Alternatives, Madison 23
James C. Wright Middle School, Madison 26
Middleton Alternative Senior High (M.A.S.H.) 28
Highland Community School, Milwaukee 30
Kickapoo River Institute, North Crawford 32
Teachers Educating, Advising, Mentoring Students (T.E.A.M.S.), Stevens Point 34
Core Knowledge Charter School, Verona 36
New Century School, Verona 38

3. Wisconsin Charter Schools Opened in 1998
Fond du Lac Area Charter School 43
Glidden Charter School 44
Coulee Montessori, La Crosse 45
Leadership Academy Charter School, Lac du Flambeau 46
Lancaster Academy 47
Mauston Alternative Resource School (M.A.R.S.) 48
Lucas Charter School, Menomonie 49
The Khamit Institute, Milwaukee 50
Marva Collins Preparatory School, Milwaukee 51
The Montessori Academy, Milwaukee 52
Monona Grove Alternative High School, Monona 53
Monroe Alternative Charter School 55
Clark County Alternative School, Neillsville 56
Project Opportunity, St. Francis 57
Trevor Accelerated Program (T.A.P.) 59
Waupaca County Charter School 60
Nature and Technology Charter School, Woodruff 62

4. Comparing Charter Schools
Curriculum/Instructional Program and Method of Student Assessment 64
Populations and Locations 65
Schedules 66
Administrative Information 67

5. Appendixes
A. Wisconsin's Charter School Law 70
B. Teaching Requirements for Charter Schools 74
C. 1997 and 1998 Federal Implementation Grant Recipients 75
D. 1997 and 1998 Federal Planning Grant Recipients 76

Foreword

This document represents the most current and complete information about charter schools in Wisconsin. I am pleased to share it with readers in Wisconsin and around the country. I think it will bring some clarity regarding our Wisconsin charter school law. And it offers clear descriptions of the fine charter schools now in operation in Wisconsin.

It is appropriate that we recognize and applaud the creativity, initiative, leadership, and hard work shown by parents, teachers, school boards, and others in planning for and creating charter schools. These public schools, open to all, have been given great autonomy and flexibility to try different instructional approaches toward varied goals in exchange for being held accountable for achievement. Charter schools provide one more option for parents, and the successes of these schools will encourage innovation in all schools.

The financial support provided this department by the United States Department of Education has played a large role in the development of charter schools. A full ninety-five percent of this money has gone in grants to groups planning charter schools and in start-up funds to operating charter schools.

This department and I remain committed to seeing the number of charter schools in our state increase and to helping them continue to build on their fine record of success.

John T. Benson
State Superintendent

Introduction

Charter schools are public, nonsectarian schools created through a businesslike contract or "charter" between the operator and the sponsoring school board or other chartering authority. The Wisconsin charter school law gives charter schools freedom from most state rules and regulations in exchange for greater accountability for results. The charter defines the missions and methods of the charter school; the chartering authority holds the school accountable to its charter. The motto is "autonomy for accountability."

Wisconsin established charter schools to foster an environment of creativity. Charter schools are, in essence, "living laboratories" that influence the larger public school system and introduce an element of competition within that system. Charter schools are created with the best elements of regular public schools in mind. Charter school leaders may experiment with different instructional theories, site-based management techniques, etc. They learn, sometimes by trial and error, what works best for their student population. Regular schools can observe and learn from what happens in the charter school and make similar improvements without having to experience "growing pains." Through this process, the entire public school system is continually challenged to improve itself.

Wisconsin also wants each charter school to meet the special needs and interests of its community, parents, and students. This is what makes each charter school unique. While many goals for educating and preparing children are similar, each charter school fulfills a specific local need in education. Some charter schools offer a choice to parents and students in the area of curriculum, teaching methodology, and classroom structure. Others work feverishly to keep that small population of at-risk students from falling through the cracks with counseling and lots of personal attention and support. In the districts with charter schools, the community, school boards, and parents have identified their needs and wants for public education and established charters that meet these.

Again, charter schools are largely independent public schools. They are freed from what they see as mostly burdensome regulations in exchange for greater accountability for results.

Wisconsin Charter Schools State Summary 1

History

Sponsorship

Legal Status

What Charter Schools Can and Cannot Do

Organization and Governance

Teaching Requirements

Funding

Accountability

History

Wisconsin's charter school program was established in 1993 to encourage innovation in school organization and instruction. The initiative received bipartisan support, and it initially authorized 10 school districts to each establish up to two charter schools or a total of 20 statewide. Thirteen charter schools were created under this original law.

In 1995, revisions to that first charter school law gave chartering authority to all school boards statewide and eliminated the cap on the total number of charter schools. In 1997, the state legislature made another revision to the law. This revision gave chartering authority in Milwaukee to the chancellor of the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee (UWM), to the Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC), and to the Common Council of the City of Milwaukee.

Finally, in the 1998 budget adjustment session, the state legislature made additional changes to the law that allow for a school district to contract with a Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) to operate a charter school as long as it is located within the CESA. Another change requires that a school board receiving a petition to establish a charter school or to convert a nonsectarian private school to a charter school must hold a public hearing on the matter and must consider the fiscal impact of the establishment of the charter. A final change allows the school district in which a charter school is located to determine whether or not the charter school is an instrumentality of the school district. (Instrumentality is defined in the section entitled Legal Status.)

Sponsorship

School boards in Wisconsin can create charter schools. And, as noted earlier, in Milwaukee the Common Council, UWM and MATC also have this chartering authority. Each may establish, sponsor, and/or operate an unlimited number of charter schools. The chartering entity also reviews petitions submitted to it and reserves complete discretion in granting or denying a petition. The chartering entity must give preference to an applicant that would establish a charter school to serve the at-risk student population when it must choose from competing petitions. There is no state appeals process for denied petitions except in Milwaukee where denied petitioners may appeal to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

Legal Status

In school districts, the school board may determine whether the charter school is or is not an instrumentality of the school district in which it is located. If the board deems it an instrumentality, the district employs all personnel for the charter school. If the board determines the charter school is not an instrumentality, the personnel will be considered employees of the charter school.

While some charter schools are identified as an instrumentality of the district, the word "instrumentality" is not defined in the charter school law and has had limited use in Wisconsin. The word has been used to denote the concept of alter ego or subsidiary, and was initially included in the charter law to ensure continuing eligibility of charter school teachers in the Wisconsin Retirement System. The word instrumentality as used in the retirement law defines the employer, making it clear that the employing school district is the entity which is responsible for worker's compensation, insurance, unemployment compensation, employee insurance and benefits, liability for acts of school staff members, etc.

A charter school in Milwaukee that receives its charter from the Common Council, UWM, or MATC is not an instrumentality of the Milwaukee Public Schools, and the school board may not employ any personnel for the charter school. One exception to this exists in the law. If one of these chartering entities contracts with an individual or group operating for profit to operate the school, then that charter school is an instrumentality of the Milwaukee Public Schools; the board of education will then employ all personnel for the charter school.

The Wisconsin Charter School Law appears in its entirety in Appendix A.

What Charter Schools Can and Cannot Do

Charter schools in Wisconsin are exempt from most state requirements regarding public education. However, they must meet four state requirements. First, teachers must be licensed by the DPI. Second, charter schools must participate in the Wisconsin Student Assessment System; this includes administering the third-grade reading comprehension test; the knowledge and concepts examinations, a battery of standardized tests given in fourth, eighth, and tenth grades covering the subjects of

reading, math, science, language arts, and social studies; and, beginning in the year 2000-01, the high school graduation examination. Third, charter schools must participate in the annual school performance report. And fourth, students are to be counted for membership in the local school district.

Charter schools are not exempt from federal laws governing education or civil rights policies, nor are they exempt from local school board policies unless negotiated in district contracts. This last provision does not pertain, of course, to noninstrumentality charter schools.

A charter school cannot charge tuition and must be equally accessible to all students in the school district. Preference in admission must be given to students living within the attendance area of an existing school that is converted to a charter school. Nonresident students may be admitted to charter schools under tuition agreements or under the Wisconsin Public School Open Enrollment program.

Charter schools may not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation, or physical, mental, emotional, or learning disability. And, the charter school contract must clearly spell out how the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that reflects the balance in the school district as a whole.

Attendance at a charter school must be voluntary, and the district must provide alternative public education for pupils who do not wish to attend the charter school or who are not admitted to the charter school. This provision also applies should a school board enter into a contract that would result in the conversion of all of the public schools in the district to charter schools.

Charter schools can be completely new schools, conversions from public schools, or conversions from private nonsectarian schools.

Health and safety requirements apply to charter schools as well as to all Wisconsin public schools.

Organization and Governance

Charter schools are free to be creative in setting up their administrative and governance structures, so long as parental involvement is demonstrated. Many break from traditional management models by establishing decision-making boards that include school staff, parents, and area employers. Others have parent and teacher committees to address school needs, such as fund-raising and the budget. Others include student representatives in their governing bodies. This is truly a move from representative democracy to participatory democracy.

In many of the school-within-a-school charters, the administrative structures are similar to traditional public school administrations because districts share services such as transportation, food service, accounting and payroll, libraries, special education programs, and special classes like art, music, and physical education.

Teaching Requirements

Generally, DPI licenses teachers in specific subject areas and specific grade levels. To give charter schools more flexibility in their staffing, DPI has created a charter school teaching license to allow licensed teachers to teach any subject or any grade in the charter school. Charter schools can also employ other professionals who are not trained as teachers by using a DPI-issued charter school teaching permit. Requirements for the charter school teaching permit include having a bachelor's degree in the subject area to be taught or in a related field, or having formal proof of mastery in a trade that he or she is assigned to teach. Permit holders must be supervised by a person who is fully licensed.

The chief administrator of the chartering authority may request that a charter school teaching permit be granted to an individual hired to perform instructional duties if a search for a qualified, licensed individual is unsuccessful. The charter school teaching permit is valid for one year, with renewal possible if the applicant completes six credits in an approved teacher education program. For additional information on charter school teacher licensure, please see the Wisconsin Administrative Code at Appendix B or call the Teacher Education and Licensing section at DPI.

Teachers in regular public schools are normally members of the teachers union and afforded the rights and privileges of the master contract. Such teachers are enrolled in the Wisconsin Retirement System. The same is true for staff members of a charter school that is formed by and is an instrumentality of the school district.

Noninstrumentality charter schools, as noted, are those in which the staff members are not employees of the school district or chartering authority. Thus, they are not eligible to participate in the Wisconsin Retirement System and are not members of the local teachers union.

Funding

Approximately two-thirds of the money to fund K-12 education in Wisconsin comes from state funds raised primarily through state income and sales taxes. The remaining one-third comes from other sources, including property taxes, federal aid, and local fees. Charter schools are also publicly funded with the amount of money determined by the type of chartering authority.

In those schools chartered by a school district, the contract or charter determines the amount of funding. In some cases, the district's per-pupil expenditure follows the student as he or she moves from a regular public school to a charter school. In other cases, the charter school functions with less money. This is made possible by locating the charter school within an existing district facility, by sharing management costs with the school district, and by participating in district services such as transportation, operation, cocurricular activities, psychological services, and food service. The school district counts charter school students on its regular average daily membership count for state aid purposes.

In those schools chartered by the City of Milwaukee, UWM, and MATC, the amount of funding is determined by state law. Specifically, the law provides that state aid in the amount of the previous year's shared cost per member will be deducted from state aid to the Milwaukee Public Schools and paid directly to the operator of the charter school. The total amount is based on the total number of pupils attending the charter school.

Several charter schools have received grants and gifts from community, state, and national organizations; foundations; businesses; and private individuals.

Federal charter school start-up grants also help in the planning and implementation of charter schools in Wisconsin. Grant funds may be used for planning and implementation activities such as professional development, assessment strategies, curriculum development, investments in technology, and updating of facilities. Grants may also be used to defray other costs not covered by state and local funds. The U.S. Department of Education funded a proposal by DPI for three federal fiscal years beginning on October 1, 1996. Funds received in 1996-97 totaled $1,325,000 with 95 percent of the funds being sent in sub-grants to groups planning charter schools and to operating charter schools and with five percent being retained by DPI for costs related to the administration of the grant. Funds received in 1997-98 totaled $1,956,548; again, 95 percent was immediately awarded in sub-grants to operating charter schools and planning groups. Appendix C shows how the implementation awards were distributed among Wisconsin's 17 operating charter schools. The total amount of the grant for 1998-99 has not yet been determined. Additional information concerning these grants is available in Appendixes C and D, or by calling the charter school consultant at DPI.

Accountability

A charter school is a public school that is exempted from many traditional state and local rules and regulations, thus allowing greater flexibility. In exchange for this flexibility, charter schools are held accountable for the achievement of the high academic standards described in their charters. A charter school that fails to meet these standards risks being closed by its chartering agency. Thus, the motto of charter schools—"autonomy for accountability."

Pursuant to Wisconsin law, charters may be granted for any term not exceeding five school years and may be renewed for terms again not exceeding five years. A charter may be revoked if the chartering entity finds that the charter school violated its contract, failed to comply with generally accepted accounting standards of fiscal management, or if pupils enrolled failed to make sufficient progress in attaining educational goals.

In addition to being accountable to their chartering entity, the schools must be accountable to state law which includes voluntary admission, nondiscriminatory practices, and health and safety requirements. Also, they must participate in the Wisconsin Student Assessment System and in the annual school performance report.

Wisconsin Charter Schools 2

Appleton Central Alternative School
Beaver Dam Charter School
Deerfield Alternative Charter School
McKinley Charter School, Eau Claire
The Brompton School, Kenosha
Paideia Academy, Kenosha
School of Technology and Arts (SOTA), La Crosse
School of Technology and Arts II (SOTA II), La Crosse
Ladysmith Evening Alternative School
Affiliated Alternatives, Madison
James C. Wright Middle School, Madison
Middleton Alternative Senior High (M.A.S.H.)
Highland Community School, Milwaukee
Kickapoo River Institute, North Crawford
Teachers Educating, Advising, Mentoring Students (T.E.A.M.S.), Stevens Point
Core Knowledge Charter School, Verona
New Century School, Verona

Appleton Central Alternative School

120 East Harris Street
Appleton, WI 54913
LuAnn Coenen
(920) 832-6136

Appleton Area School District
Thomas Scullen, District Administrator
P.O. Box 2019
Appleton, WI 54913-2019
(920) 832-6126

Appleton Central Alternative School (ACAS), located in the Appleton Area School District's Morgan Building, serves up to 100 at-risk youths in grades 9 through 12. These students have problems, including truancy, adjudication, addictive behaviors, and dysfunctional families that cannot be dealt with in a traditional school setting or its at-risk programs. ACAS provides an alternative method of continued learning in an atmosphere that is sensitive and suited to the intellectual, physical, and social development of the students. Students get a clear explanation of the expectations and a new opportunity to practice, learn, and perform.

The ACAS staff includes an administrator, four teachers, a secretary, an educational assistant, a social worker, a police liaison officer, and a work experience coordinator. The full-time administrator acts as a liaison to the superintendent and school board and supervises all district at-risk programs. The on-site police liaison officer helps the charter school to overcome barriers that interfere with the learning process. He handles discipline in the school as an assistant principal might and serves as a counselor to students on family issues or on available community services. Students learn through daily contact to trust law enforcement. The management of the charter school is site-based, with all employees participating in decision making.

This school is designed to place special emphasis on the development of close relationships among students and faculty, and to foster a sense of belonging. The school's broad goals include providing personalized instruction for each student; motivating students to develop a more positive attitude toward school; improving school attendance; enhancing students' self image; and improving the communication between parents, students, school, and the community. Character education is also important, including appropriate decision making, honesty, integrity, and persistence in the face of adversity.

The curriculum of the alternative school is self-paced, individualized, and competency-based; and includes the core subjects of English, reading, math, science, and social studies. Students are able to choose the academic options that best meet their needs. A school goal is to integrate ACAS students into their home high school for their final semester and graduation, as ACAS does not issue its own diploma. Students may also choose High School Equivalency Diploma or General Equivalency Diploma programs. Flexibility allows for students to reevaluate and change options at any time. Appleton Central Alternative achieves its curricular goals by two primary means: first, through technology in academics and second, through work experience.

Technology

Teachers use computers frequently to implement the critical elements of effective education - diagnosis, prescription, instruction, and evaluation. ACAS was the first high school in Wisconsin to use the *NovaNET Lab*, an integrated learning system provided on-line through subscription with the University of Illinois. The *NovaNET* gives students access to more than 150 subjects and flexible, self-paced instruction. This curriculum expands the definition of "basic skills" to include problem solving, critical thinking, and hypothesis testing. Because all Appleton high schools participate in the *NovaNET Lab*, curriculums are coordinated, allowing charter school students to transfer credits back to their home high schools easily. Research has shown that an on-line curriculum allows students from diverse backgrounds to interact, resulting in improved communication skills and motivation. Computer-assisted instruction provides students, teachers, and parents great detail in the reports it produces to monitor short- and long-term student performance, scores, and course completion. Students must achieve a grade of 80 percent to move on in the course. Teachers also use portfolio information to identify students' individual strengths and weaknesses and to plan appropriate instruction or intervention.

ACAS also uses the PASS (Portable Assisted Study Sequence) tests to help students in areas where they are credit deficient. These are more traditional written correspondence courses that the students can work on at home. Teachers use the PASS books to offer a greater variety in the curriculum.

Technology is further supplemented through traditional classroom style learning. ACAS has its own

science lab. Students may also take courses part-time at their home high school. At ACAS, classroom courses are taught at an 8:1 student to teacher ratio, allowing for more personalized attention.

Work Experience

Appleton Central Alternative School requires attendance for a minimum of 15 hours per week, an average of three hours per day. The school runs a three-hour session in the morning and a three-hour session in the afternoon, allowing time for outside employment. Because students on this three-hour school day earn fewer credits toward graduation than traditional students, work experience provides an opportunity for charter school pupils to earn credits equivalent to one or two instructional periods per week. Working also provides an excellent alternative for students who are at risk of dropping out because they need to work.

Five area businesses sponsor the employment of ACAS students in part-time jobs that have been designated as educational. The work experience coordinator supervises students in this business-mentor program. Students are allowed up to 5.5 elective credits in this area, with 180 hours of work being counted as one credit hour. The number of hours a student may work outside of school is unrestricted. Volunteer work in the community, at the school, or as an apprentice, also qualifies for credit. Career exploration allows students to develop marketable job skills and a connection to the community, while giving them the chance to meet the district diploma requirements for high school graduation.

The ABLE Tests (Adult Basic Learning Exams) have been selected for measuring program effectiveness, and they will be administered to students at the beginning and end of a term or program. ABLE is a complete battery of tests that measure the level of educational achievement, regardless of student background or levels of schooling. The ABLE tests cover the basic skills in the context of adult competencies. Test content centers on situations adults are likely to encounter in everyday life, making the tests relevant and interesting.

Table 1

Appleton Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	Appleton Central Alternative High School[1]		Appleton Area School District[2]	
Grades	9-12		9-12	
Total Enrollment	95		4,530	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	52	54.7	2,316	51.2
Females	43	45.3	2,214	48.8
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	3	3.2	26	0.6
Asian or Pacific Islanders	4	4.2	337	7.4
Blacks	1	1.1	37	0.8
Hispanics	0	0.0	54	1.2
Whites	87	88.8	4,076	90.0
At-Risk Students[3]	95	100.0	604	13.3
Learning Disabled[4]	9	9.5	309	6.8
Emotionally Disturbed[4]	9	9.5	80	1.8
Physically Handicapped[4]	2	2.1	4	0.09
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	26	27.4	2,231[5]	17.0[5]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on at-risk students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 2-24-98.
[4]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[5]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

Beaver Dam Charter School

400 East Burnett Street
Beaver Dam, WI 53916
Don Smith
(920) 885-7423

Beaver Dam Unified School District
Richard Fitzpatrick, District Administrator
705 McKinley Street
Beaver Dam, WI 53916
(920) 885-7308

Beaver Dam Charter School is a district-initiated school, serving 150 at-risk students in grades 6 through 12 and beyond. The district recognized the need for more specialized school programming, creating a solution that now serves about five to seven percent of the total Beaver Dam high school population. About 75 percent of charter school students come from broken homes or have had trouble with drug use. However, in the charter school environment, they seem to flourish. Attendance among students moving from regular to charter school has improved from 54 percent to 80 percent.

Student admission is based on attendance records, academic records, and behavioral and psychological needs. Students may refer themselves, or be referred by parents, employers, or friends.

The Beaver Dam Charter School's goal is to assist students in becoming valuable members of the community through three major program components: academics, personal and social skill development, and employability skills.

Academics

Students may work toward a traditional high school credit diploma, High School Equivalency Diploma, General Equivalency Diploma, or a newly developed district competency-based diploma. To receive the competency-based diploma, students must master 10 core competencies before presenting their portfolios to the school board. Beaver Dam Charter School first awarded this new diploma in June 1998.

Whenever possible, the curriculum is project-oriented, with an emphasis on hands-on learning activities rather than information mastery. Course work includes language arts, math, science and health, social studies, computer literacy, business, employability, and applied life skills. Students select course work from self-paced course packets, computer instruction, group instruction, independent study, or a combination of these.

Personal and Social Development

After a long history of failure in the traditional school setting, many at-risk students arrive at the charter school exhibiting mistrust of authority figures, difficulty controlling anger, inability to resolve conflict other than by physical means, and, in general, socially inappropriate behavior. The personal and social development component aims to create positive and respectful relationships between adults and students, conveying a message of concern and offering direct help to individuals with their personal problems. In this area, the staff serve as a surrogate family, modeling appropriate relationships and behaviors.

Students address topics such as truancy, responsibility, goal setting, peer relationships, relationships with adults, and conflict resolution. Community mental health care providers and district pupil services staff address these issues through group presentations, individual counseling, team building activities, field trips, community service projects, and more traditional paper and pencil activities.

Employability

Employability, the final program component, helps to ensure a successful school-to-work transition. Students receive instruction and first-hand experience in job seeking, job keeping, entry level skills, and job exploration. The employability curriculum is based upon the Secretary of Labor's Commission on Achieving National Skills (SCANS) report of workplace competencies. All students are expected to participate in employment or to complete community service projects through local places of business. Industry has been extremely supportive by offering work stations and by collaborating with charter school staff regarding student performance. At graduation, charter school students leave with extensive portfolios and summaries of job-related experiences, such as letters of application, resumes, community service projects, work experiences, and job readiness endorsements completed by charter staff and employers.

Charter school students know that the community supports them because taxpayers voted to increase taxes to create their school. Before the 1997-98 school year, the school district completely renovated an old factory that now serves as the charter school facility. Community service projects and field trips have thus been aimed at instilling a desire

and need in the students to give back to the community. In 1998, students continued work at Horicon Marsh, building walking trails and a wildlife center. Students also run a used bookstore at the Beaver Dam Mall, a project that provides both academic and work learning experience.

Students, teachers, and parents collaborate to map out individualized programs incorporating all three program components. Since not all students come to the program with the same skills, the focus on program components varies from student to student. The parents work closely with staff not only in the development of their children's programs but also in assessing student progress.

A full-day middle school program serves a maximum of 12 students. The high school program includes a morning school session for juniors and seniors, allowing them to hold jobs or do their community service projects in the afternoon. Freshmen and sophomores attend morning school sessions at the regular high school and have afternoon school sessions at the charter school.

The charter school also runs a special education alternative program. These students, who are either learning disabled or emotionally disturbed, have been adapting well in the charter school environment.

A night program for students 18 years old and older allows students to achieve their educational goals, even if they have to work during the day. A separate school-aged parent program provides on-site child care for charter students, and students may continue using the daycare when they return to the regular high school.

Management of the charter school is through a site-based work team with all employees (six teachers, five program assistants and a social worker) participating in decision making. The charter school advisory board includes parents, community business leaders, and charter staff and administrators. The district's director of pupil services serves as an administrative liaison between the board of education and the site-based work team at the charter school. At the close of each school year, the charter school staff present evaluation data to the board.

Table 2

Beaver Dam Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	Beaver Dam Charter School[1]		Beaver Dam School District[2]	
Grades	6-12		6-12	
Total Enrollment	134		1,894	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	78	58.2	957	50.5
Females	56	41.8	937	49.5
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	0	0.0	5	0.3
Asians/Pacific Islanders	1	0.75	20	1.1
Blacks	1	0.75	4	0.2
Hispanics	4	3.0	66	3.5
Whites	128	95.5	1,799	94.9
At-Risk Students	134	100.0	data not available	
Learning Disabled[3]	10	8.5	116	6.1
Emotionally Disturbed[3]	17	12.7	43	2.3
Physically Handicapped[3]	0	0.0	1	0.05
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	6	4.5	513[4]	17.0[4]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[4]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

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Deerfield Charter High School

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Barb Noll
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Deerfield Community School District
Ruthann Faber, District Administrator
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Deerfield, WI 53531
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The Deerfield Charter High School currently serves 10 students, most of whom are at-risk students dealing with issues that include stress and anger management; and lack of motivation, pride, and respect. The school philosophy is built on the principles of respect, care and support, high expectations, and the opportunity to participate. The smallness of the school is a guarantee of support and individual attention. The Deerfield Charter High School's staff recognize that the traditional school setting does not meet some students' educational needs. They feel it is their mission to provide an environment that promotes these students' social, emotional, academic, and vocational growth.

The school itself resides within the high school building but is autonomous in terms of program goals, staff, and policies. One teacher and one program aide run the program, with assistance from the social worker, counselor, and support staff at the regular high school. Being a "school within a school" means that charter school students have use of facilities like the gymnasium and the home economics rooms.

The curriculum is based on applied knowledge such as communication, creative problem solving, and decision making. As students apply their knowledge within and across the various curricular areas, they develop the concepts and complex thinking of an educated person. The charter school emphasizes five main areas of concentration: application of basics, ability to think, skill in communication, production of quality work, and connections with the community. The charter school is currently developing a Deerfield Charter diploma, which would require 13 credits in core subjects, community service hours, paid work experience, a portfolio and oral interview, and a demonstration of preparedness for independent living.

Teachers, students, and parents cooperate to establish individual learning plans. The school provides students with nontraditional approaches to meet their high school graduation requirements. Students have the option to work independently, in their area of choice, at their own pace; but they receive more guidance from teachers in core areas like history.

A distinguishing characteristic of the Deerfield Charter High School is that it uses integrated, theme-based units in lieu of traditional classes, hoping to tap into the students' interests and strengths. The students develop a list of interests within the core areas of academics, and the teacher develops the theme-based units from this list. Theme-based classes are held for 45 minutes every day, including a portion of lecture, discussion, and hands-on projects. Students are encouraged to embrace the process of learning, not just the end product.

In the 1997-98 school year, students focused on a "roots and culture" unit. The staff wanted to get the students out of the traditional classroom and into the community to do their learning. As a result, students took weekly trips to towns around Wisconsin that serve as hubs for different culture groups. Students learned about the lives, foods, and traditions of the people in these towns, and did historical research on the internet to learn why certain immigrant groups settled in Wisconsin. Learning on this topic culminated in a holiday celebration; students shopped for and prepared ethnic dishes and presented completed projects to their families and teachers. According to the lead teacher, the event was such a success that guests simply didn't want to leave.

In addition, students are involved in community service projects and volunteer activities to gain a better sense of pride and belonging within their community. The result is increased self-esteem and confidence. Students are overcoming the isolation of their rural town and gaining a larger sense of community through technology, using the internet to facilitate global communication and learning. All community service projects and technology training are tied back into a theme-based unit.

Evaluation of progress is performance-based through portfolios, conferences, videotaped presentation of project work, narrative style report cards, and some standardized tests. Instead of cramming for exams, students actually look forward to facing tests or presenting projects, confident that they know the material and proud to show and share their knowledge.

Evaluation is based on content, attendance, attitude, pride, and effort. The staff believes this equalizes opportunity between gifted students who display a poor attitude and those students whose grades in traditional classroom often fail to acknowledge the student's work ethic. This makes a student's effort as valuable as the letter grade. Teachers keep extensive daily logs on the students, documenting progress and concerns.

Students in ninth through twelfth grades are referred to the program through the Deerfield Student Support Team. Deerfield staff, parents, and community agencies refer children who are behind their peers academically, are habitually truant, or cannot adjust to the traditional school setting. Students are encouraged to initiate meetings with the team. All students are eligible but must first meet with the school staff and their parents to establish individual plans. Students are not required to participate; charter school staff want parents and students to choose this alternative style of learning.

The basic tenets of the governance policy for the school are participatory and shared decision making among charter school parents, teachers, administrators, and to a lesser extent and as appropriate, by some students. The board of education, however, approves all policy decisions.

The purpose of the Deerfield Charter High School is to increase the number of students who experience success in school, graduate, and develop the skills and knowledge needed for postsecondary education, job placement, and independent living. Through alternative educational choices, an environment is created that enhances a student's feelings of self-worth and ability to learn and to succeed.

Table 3

Deerfield Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	Deerfield Charter High School[1]		Deerfield Community School District[2]	
Grades	9-12		9-12	
Total Enrollment	10		213	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	7	70.0	105	49.3
Females	3	30.0	108	50.7
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	0	0.0	1	0.5
Asians or Pacific Islanders	0	0.0	0	0.0
Blacks	0	0.0	3	1.4
Hispanics	0	0.0	10	4.7
Whites	10	100.0	199	93.4
At-Risk Students	10	100.0	data not available	
Learning Disabled[3]	2	20.0	26	12.2
Emotionally Disturbed[3]	3	30.0	9	4.2
Physically Handicapped[3]	2	20.0	data not available	
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	2	20.0	95[4]	13.0[4]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[4]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

McKinley Charter School, Eau Claire

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Holly Hart
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Eau Claire School District
William Klaus, District Administrator
500 Main Street
Eau Claire, WI 54701-3770
(715) 839-6071

McKinley Charter School has an enrollment of 67 students from the Eau Claire and Altoona School Districts. The school serves two types of students. The first type includes students in grades 6 through 12 who are at risk of, or who are returning from, expulsion and out-of-community placement. These students will pursue a credit diploma. The school also serves seniors with less than 13 earned credits who cannot meet the requirements of the districts' competency-based program. These students will work toward a High School Equivalency Diploma.

These two services provided at McKinley Charter School are beyond the alternative high school and credit remediation programs provided by the district. Students who request services from and are accepted into the charter school are students for whom all other regular education, exceptional education, and at-risk programs have not been or would not be appropriate. They often find themselves having difficulty at home or in the community. Many have experienced everything from abuse, violence, and drugs to gang involvement. These are students who cannot safely function in a regular school setting.

Basic Philosophies

McKinley's program is grounded in the philosophies of brain-based learning, quality schools, acceleration, multiple intelligences, integrated thematic instruction, and a reality therapy-based discipline model.

Brain-based Learning

Staff incorporated many new studies on how the brain functions when developing their instructional approach. Staff have also explored the effects of nutrition on learning, noting that a morning diet high in protein over carbohydrates stimulates learning.

Reality Therapy-Based Discipline Model

The discipline model is based on the tenet that rewards and punishments do not work to alter long-term behavior and that people have five basic needs: food and safety, power, fun, freedom, and love and belonging. McKinley seeks to fulfill these needs in positive ways. The model provides a continuum of options and responses from minor to major interventions and emphasizes the development of self-control and character. National experts are serving as resources as the model is being developed.

Program Goals

The primary goal of the program is to provide an integrated academic, behavioral, and vocational program that will help students to ultimately graduate, to live responsibly in the community, and to achieve economic self-sufficiency through legal means.

Academic

Specific objectives are established in the core areas of math, science, social studies, and English. Integrated, theme-based units emphasizing accelerated, hands-on learning activities are developed based on the interests of the students. Integrated/thematic units covered in the 1997-98 school year included abuse, the Holocaust, Native Americans, Winter Olympics, rain forests, and needs and wants. An adventure-based physical education curriculum builds teamwork, trust, responsibility, and appropriate peer and adult relationships.

Students attend school daily from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., a period of time when students are most receptive to learning, according to the brain-based learning studies. Statistically, teenage crime occurs most often between the hours of 3 p.m. and 5 p.m., another reason for choosing these class hours. There are no bells and set periods. The teaching staff has the flexibility to adjust the schedule to best fit each integrated thematic unit.

An individualized learning plan is written for each student. Staff members evaluate individual student progress using portfolios, papers, projects, tests, and the Wisconsin Student Assessment System. McKinley Charter School has maintained attendance rates of 85 percent to 95 percent since opening. Students who previously earned "Fs" when they were present in school at all are now earning "As," Bs," and "Cs" legitimately.

HSED testing is completed through a contract with the local technical college in their testing center. In May 1998, McKinley Charter School began awarding its own diploma.

Personal-Social

Staff members emphasize personal and social skill development through an atmosphere of mutual respect, care, and concern. Conflict resolution and anger management components are provided through classroom instruction, support groups, modeling by staff, and daily problem-solving activities. Group activities emphasize teamwork. Students are responsible for preparing their own hot lunch daily and completing all related tasks, including planning, shopping, budgeting, coupon clipping, food preparation, and cleanup.

McKinley is also a value-based school. The curriculum emphasizes developing and understanding a code of beliefs and values for the school. These include being honest, reasonable, responsible, respectful, legal, and safe. Students measure all rules and decisions against these beliefs and values and agree to abide by them.

Employability

Employability skills are enhanced through career exploration, job search skills, work-based learning, and transition services to postsecondary education, the world of work, or the military. Placements outside of the McKinley Charter School are made through a contract between the charter school, the designated school receiving a transitioning McKinley student, the student, and the parent. Staff also work with students to ensure the completion of community service hours.

McKinley is run by a nine-person governance board that includes a student, parent, high school and middle school assistant principals, a representative of the at-risk teaching staff, a representative of the Altoona School District, and three community/business leaders.

The staff of the McKinley Charter School includes three teachers, four aides, a half-time secretary, a quarter-time administrator, and two facilitators. The two facilitators handle day-to-day coordination of the academic and behavioral components. The management system of the school is a site-based and shared decision-making model. All teachers are licensed and are seeking licensing in teaching emotionally disturbed students. All aides are licensed as handicapped children's aides.

Table 4

McKinley Charter School, Eau Claire and Altoona Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	McKinley Charter School[1]		Eau Claire and Altoona School Districts[2]	
Grades	6-12		6-12	
Total Enrollment	67		7,111	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	49	73.1	3,617	50.9
Females	18	26.9	3,494	49.1
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	3	4.5	49	0.7
Asians or Pacific Islanders	0	0.0	465	6.5
Blacks	2	3.0	47	0.7
Hispanics	1	1.5	60	0.8
Whites	61	91.0	6,490	91.3
At-Risk Students[3]	67	100.0	136	2.2
Learning Disabled[4]	5	7.5	422	5.9
Emotionally Disturbed[4]	14	20.9	147	2.1
Physically Handicapped[4]	0	0.0	11	0.2
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	29	43.3	3,705[5]	30.2[5]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on at-risk students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 2-24-98.
[4]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[5]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

The Brompton School, Kenosha

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Kenosha Unified School District #1
Michael Johnson, District Administrator
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The Brompton School began operating in the 1997-98 school year with 91 students in kindergarten through sixth grade. The school's maximum enrollment capacity for the 1998-99 school year is 112. Brompton is a school of choice located in the Saint Casimir Parish school building, where it has use of seven classrooms, a library, a computer room, a gym, several offices, and a playground area. This charter school seeks to serve the students who might otherwise be "lost in the middle" by virtue of the fact that they are not otherwise identified for exceptional abilities or disabilities.

The charter school's relationship with Saint Casimir Parish is unique. For students choosing to attend, the parish offers religious instruction before the start of the school day in an area of the building separate from that used by the school. The Brompton School itself is a strictly nonsectarian school whose staff have gone to great lengths to insure that there are no religious references. Values like community service, responsibility, and respect are embraced. The charter school is a fiscal entity of the Kenosha Unified School District.

The staff's philosophy is that small class size, direct instructional methods, a challenging basic skills program, high expectations for student success, and a high degree of parental involvement are essential components to student success. Class size is limited to 16 students per grade, ensuring students individual attention.

The school is founded on the belief that a solid foundation in basic skills and content knowledge is the cornerstone of academic success, that reading is key to educational achievement, that education should be a sequential process that builds upon previous knowledge, and that structured learning experiences and development of study skills are essential. The staff believes that through academic success, children develop the feelings of self-worth and confidence that are essential to future success. Success earned through hard work is a positive motivating factor for future success.

The Brompton School offers a rigorous basic skills curriculum emphasizing phonics-based reading instruction and use of classical literature at all grade levels. The curriculum is an accelerated path of sequential, ordered instruction. Students are expected to come to school prepared. Homework is assigned daily. Reading for comprehension is stressed at all ages. A volunteer librarian teaches research skills. Parents have also contracted for the Bookmobile to stop by their school weekly, giving students an even wider variety of reading material.

A full-day kindergarten provides students an opportunity for social development and age-appropriate academics. Students learn reading through phonics and decoding letter-sound clues. They write their own thank you letters to classroom visitors, and while they may misspell words at this young age, the words they write are phonetically correct. Kindergartners are also exposed to math, science, social studies, art, music, foreign language (Spanish), and physical education.

At the primary and intermediate grade levels, students focus on mastery of the basics: reading, grammar and writing skills, spelling, penmanship, public speaking, math, science, history, and geography. The staff believe that confident readers become confident students in all subjects. The math curriculum emphasizes application of basic math facts and operations. Math competency is developed through regular, consistent instruction and practice. In social studies, students address the topics of citizenship, personal development, and vocational skills. A liberal arts program enriches student experience with the study of art history and technique, music appreciation and performance, physical education, foreign language, and technology.

Parents affirm their intent to be actively involved with their child's learning through a parent contract. Staff believe that parental support of a child's school has a strong impact on student achievement. Parents are thus encouraged to seek membership on the school advisory council and to volunteer in school activities and organizations.

The parent contract also affirms family support of the school's uniform policy. School staff find that uniforms work well with the school's philosophy. Uniforms promote discipline and orderliness, eliminate unnecessary competition, and focus the students' attention on learning.

The school is governed by an advisory committee composed of community members, teachers, parents, and the school director. The advisory committee establishes school policies, and the director coordinates the daily operation of the school.

Selection for enrollment to this charter school is accomplished through a lottery system. In the middle of the 1997-98 school year, the school announced 28 open positions and received more than 200 applications. Because of the lottery system, school demographics are completely random, with the fourth grade class turning out to be almost entirely female, and the combined fifth and sixth grade class turning out to be almost completely male. The charter school accepts and works with all children, regardless of disability, but is forthright with parents about its ability to serve all students' needs. The school does have a speech therapist on site, but has no in-school nurse, counseling, or social services. Students who require special education services may receive these through other schools in the district. Parents who believe their children would be best served by this charter school voluntarily waive integrated EEN services.

Six full-time teachers, two part-time teachers (Spanish and music), and a part-time educational assistant monitor and assess student progress through written and oral exams and annual testing in subject areas. The charter school has a very strict "no social promotion policy;" students must perform at grade level to be promoted. Criterion-referenced exams are administered as a way to monitor individual student progress and program effectiveness. Parents are informed of student progress through daily written comments from classroom teachers, written progress reports, and mandatory parent conferences.

Table 5

The Brompton School, Kenosha Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	The Brompton School[1]		Kenosha Unified School District[2]	
Grades	K-6		K-6	
Total Enrollment	91		10,475	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	46	50.1	5,469	52.2
Females	45	49.9	5,006	47.8
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	0	0.0	36	0.3
Asians or Pacific Islanders	2	2.2	114	1.1
Blacks	4	4.4	1,392	13.3
Hispanics	4	4.4	974	9.3
Whites	81	89.0	7,959	76.0
At-Risk Students[3]	6	6.6	36	0.3
Learning Disabled[4]	4	4.4	422	4.0
Emotionally Disturbed[4]	0	0.0	116	1.1
Physically Handicapped[4]	0	0.0	28	0.3
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	data not available		5,263[5]	27.0[5]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on at-risk students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 2-24-98.
[4]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[5]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

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Paideia Academy, Kenosha

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Paideia Academy is a school of choice, serving up to 75 students in grades 6 through 8 in the Kenosha Unified School District. The school began operation in the 1997-98 school year, serving only seventh and eighth graders. It expanded to include sixth graders with the start of the 1998-99 school year. The school rents space from St. James, a Catholic school located near downtown Kenosha.

Paideia is a curriculum philosophy, and the Paideia Academy is the first in Wisconsin to implement this approach. Instruction is accomplished through three techniques; didactic, coaching, and seminar; and aims to use Socratic questioning and critical thinking to link problem-solving strategies to real-life situations.

Didactic

Didactic instruction is the acquisition of organized knowledge through teacher-led lecture and instruction; this comprises about 20 percent of the students' learning time.

Coaching

The coaching component, comprising about 60 percent of the students' time, encourages students to use the intellectual skills necessary for critical thinking. Students take more responsibility for their learning by setting goals. Working in labs on cooperative teams and creating projects and oral presentations are all part of the coaching component. Students contribute to writing the rubrics, put together their own portfolios, and then share and evaluate what they have learned.

Seminar

The seminar component is a group learning experience where students discuss, using different levels of questions, material related to the lesson. The teacher's role is to provide leading questions about great works of literature, art pieces, and math and science readings. The seminar is designed to make students use their higher level thinking skills and look at the ideas of others in innovative and meaningful ways. Benefits of the seminars include learning respect for fellow students' ideas, learning to solve problems as part of a group, and learning conflict resolution strategies.

Paideia is a student-generated teaching model. Studies show that this model improves the students' ability to organize thoughts more quickly, to work with others, and to talk about a subject. The school's curriculum is based on the standards and guidelines of the district, but the Paideia philosophy and the school's charter status provide more flexibility in the delivery of that curriculum.

Paideia Academy's mission is to teach children the skills and strategies to seek out new knowledge through questioning and investigation. The learning environment stresses basic math skills, complex thinking and reasoning skills, expository and narrative writing, communication, public speaking, and reading and analyzing literature. Students use complex thinking skills to explore their environment, the social sciences, world history, and the arts. Students learn how to ask questions, how to seek information, and how to use that information. Learned information will be shared with others in cooperative groups as well as whole class instruction with the student taking the role of teacher. Students select the topics of interest to research. Topics reflect the content of the integrated academic classes, those being cultural studies, citizenship and government, fine arts, and technology. Through this experience, students become successful citizens and develop a sense of self-worth, positive self-esteem, and community.

Two full-time teachers share the responsibilities of school director. The school also has a part-time art teacher and a volunteer foreign language teacher. Carthage College assists in providing language education support. The Kenosha Youth Foundation, located two blocks from Paideia Academy, provides a time and a location for a gym and swim program. In January 1998, Paideia became the first school to enter into an experimental three-year computer-leasing program with Apple Computers. The computer lab contains 25 computers, a scanner, two printers, a television, and a VCR.

Paideia is open to all students in the Kenosha Unified School District. Parents choose the school for the small learning environment and for the family atmosphere that is created when the same teacher stays with the class for its three years at Paideia. Students from Paideia go on to one of five area high schools.

Parents, along with the business community, are major stake holders in the governance of the academy. Parent advisory and support groups assist with the development of the school procedures and programs, including student and parent contracts regarding dress and behavior standards. A student advisory government structure has also developed.

Student assessment is done in many ways. In addition to receiving traditional quarterly grades, students present portfolios at student-led conferences held every six weeks, demonstrating their academic progress in the core subjects. This type of assessment plan matches the Paideia philosophy of involving students in setting goals for their learning and being responsible for demonstrating what they have learned.

Paideia Academy is run by an advisory board that includes two parents, one community member, and a school board member. The two parents serve as a point of contact for other parents to voice concerns.

Table 6

Paideia Academy, Kenosha Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	Paideia Academy[1]		Kenosha Unified School District[2]	
Grades	7-8		7-8	
Total Enrollment	39		2,773	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	14	35.9	1,412	50.9
Females	25	64.1	1,361	49.1
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	0	0.0	12	0.4
Asians or Pacific Islanders	2	5.1	26	0.9
Blacks	5	12.8	309	11.2
Hispanics	2	5.1	262	9.5
Whites	30	77.0	2,164	78.0
At-Risk Students[3]	data not available		113	4.1
Learning Disabled[4]	3	7.7	173	6.2
Emotionally Disturbed[4]	1	2.6	59	2.1
Physically Handicapped[4]	0	0.0	2	0.1
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	25	64.0	5,263[5]	27.0[5]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on at-risk students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 2-24-98.
[4]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[5]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

School of Technology and Arts (SOTA), LaCrosse

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La Crosse, WI 54603
Tarry Hall
(608) 789-7760

School District of La Crosse
Thomas Downs, District Administrator
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La Crosse, WI 54601
(608) 789-7600

The School of Technology and Arts (SOTA) opened its doors in August 1995 as an educational elementary school of choice. SOTA currently serves 90 students between the ages of five and ten from throughout the district whose families believe in the curriculum's technology and arts emphasis. Roosevelt Elementary School houses the charter school and provides transportation, administrative support, and food service.

SOTA schools follow the district's curricula, school calendar, and district/state testing programs, and are organized around five major constructs:

- multi-age, nongraded, continuous progress classrooms;
- assessment by performance, product and/or demonstration;
- customized educational programming options;
- emphasis on the arts and technology; and
- joint staff-parent school governance.

Multi-Age Classes

Students are grouped for instruction into multi-age, nongraded continuous progress classrooms based on subject content, projects, skill level, and interests. Groupings are flexible and provide for equal educational opportunities. Each student is allowed to proceed at his or her own pace. Emphasis is on building an ongoing sense of safety, caring, trust, and respect within a multi-age community. Mixed-age learning lends itself to building a broader sense of community and improving social skills beyond the child's age level. The charter school staff believe that by removing artificial barriers and obstacles associated with traditional school structures, multi-age groupings enable each child to build on their natural pattern of growth. SOTA staff focus on developing strengths rather than recording inadequacies.

Assessment

Assessment focuses on each child's progress and development with respect to goals and standards instead of making comparisons among children. Student portfolios and developmental rubrics are the primary means of monitoring, summarizing, and supporting the learning process. The portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work which demonstrates progress and accomplishments across the entire curriculum. Assessment is clearly linked to stated learning goals. No letter grades are used. Assessment of student learning, thinking, and development is a critical part of education. The ways that children are assessed affect how they learn and influence their motivation to continue learning. SOTA strives to develop assessment practices that support and enrich children's learning, motivation, and long-term development. Pupil progress is shared via conferences and narrative reports. Parents and students are also given opportunities to reflect upon learning on the report card.

Customized Educational Programs

The school's customized educational programs are based on the students' individual talents, learning styles, and needs within the district's established curricula and testing programs. Customized educational programming is a process that brings parents, children, and staff together to create an integrated, thematic plan of instruction and to develop short- and long-term educational goals. SOTA staff believe that children and parents have a right and responsibility to be directly involved in the learning process. Parents also help to monitor their children's progress, and based upon feedback from teachers, will encourage and support children's interests and efforts. Self-motivation is enhanced when children have input and ownership in the learning process.

Learning takes place in a variety of settings, including individual, small group, and total class groupings.

Arts and Technology

The curriculum emphasizes the arts through dance, music, drama/theater, and the visual arts. Individual creativity is nurtured and encouraged. SOTA staff believe that incorporation of arts and technology into the instructional delivery system enhances motivation and learning. The arts and technology

provide many opportunities to meet the diverse developmental ranges, interests, and learning styles of the students. The arts assist students in self-expression and the use of technology provides skills necessary for future success. Technology relative to the arts, including the use of computers, video production, and print media assists teachers and parents in maximizing the learning success of students.

Joint Staff-Parent School Governance

Parental involvement in SOTA is a critical component and one that is highly valued. Parents and staff jointly make decisions and policies for the school. Parent-staff school governance provides parents more ownership in their children's education and brings more of a participatory, democratic process to public schooling. Through this involvement, parents better understand the educational enterprise and make a real commitment to the school and to the students it serves. Joint school governance directly links parents and staff with the responsibility for student success. A true commitment by parents enhances children's self-motivation and ownership in their learning process. Parents help to celebrate their children's learning and they model involvement for the students. And as they do so, they become more knowledgeable of the needs of all children, not just their own. The school wants all of its participants to truly believe that this is their school and that they play a significant role in its development.

An executive steering committee of 10 parents and two staff members runs SOTA. The committee meets monthly. It addresses issues forwarded by parents, staff, students, or administrators; and handles public relations, marketing and promotions, fund-raising, school policy development, parent mentorships, and volunteer coordination.

SOTA maintains a waiting list for students wishing to attend. Priority is given to siblings of students already enrolled in SOTA. As slots become available through the year, they are filled according to age level through a lottery system.

Table 7

SOTA, LaCrosse Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	School of Technology and Arts (SOTA)[1]		LaCrosse School District[2]	
Grades	K-5		K-5	
Total Enrollment	90		5,279	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	42	46.7	2,767	52.4
Females	48	53.3	2,512	47.6
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	0	0.0	57	1.1
Asians/Pacific Islanders	0	0.0	845	16.0
Blacks	2	2.2	169	3.2
Hispanics	0	0.0	42	0.8
Whites	88	97.8	4,166	78.9
At-Risk Students	0	0.0	data not available	
Learning Disabled[3]	3	3.3	151	2.8
Emotionally Disturbed[3]	1	1.1	24	0.5
Physically Handicapped[3]	0	0.0	7	0.1
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	14	15.6	3,027[4]	36.0[4]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[4]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI's Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

School of Technology and Arts II (SOTA II), La Crosse

1900 Denton Street
La Crosse, WI 54601
Glen Jenkin
(608) 789-7670

School District of La Crosse
Thomas Downs, District Administrator
807 East Avenue South
La Crosse, WI 54601
(608) 789-7600

SOTA II began operation in the fall of 1997 as an alternative middle school of choice, serving 37 students, ages 11 to 14. Longfellow Middle School houses this charter school. The SOTA II program is a continuation of the SOTA program. Enrollment is open to any middle school student as long as they reside within the district and meet the age parameters of 11 to 14 years of age at the start of the school year. The School District of La Crosse ultimately plans to establish a SOTA III charter school that would serve high school students.

Like SOTA, SOTAII follows the district's curricula, school calendar, and district/state testing programs, and is organized around five major constructs:

- multi-age, nongraded, continuous progress classrooms;
- assessment by performance, product and/or demonstration;
- customized educational programming options;
- emphasis on the arts and technology; and
- joint staff-parent school governance.

For more details on these program components, please see the preceding report on the School of Technology and Arts (SOTA).

SOTA II will have an enrollment cap of 53 students. Priority is given to siblings of students already enrolled in SOTA. As slots become available through the year, they are filled according to age level through a lottery system.

Table 8

SOTA II, LaCrosse Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	School of Technology and Arts II (SOTA II)[1]		LaCrosse School District[2]	
Grades	6-8		6-8	
Total Enrollment	37		1,873	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	13	35	987	52.7
Females	24	65	886	47.3
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	1	2.7	23	1.2
Asians/Pacific Islanders	0	0.0	253	13.5
Blacks	1	2.7	50	2.7
Hispanics	0	0.0	16	0.9
Whites	35	94.6	1,531	81.7
At-Risk Students	18	48.6	data not available	
Learning Disabled[3]	5	13.5	151	8.6
Emotionally Disturbed[3]	1	2.7	31	1.7
Physically Handicapped[3]	1	2.7	3	0.2
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	9	24.3	3,027[4]	36.0[4]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[4]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI's Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

Ladysmith Evening Alternative School

1700 Edgewood Avenue East
Ladysmith, WI 54848
Debra Morrissey
(715) 532-5531

Ladysmith-Hawkins School District
Roy Jonjak, District Administrator
1700 Edgewood Avenue East
Ladysmith, WI 54848
(715) 532-5277

Ladysmith-Hawkins School District has established its charter school to better meet the needs of students ages 14 to 21 considered at risk of not graduating. In the 1998-99 school year, the charter school expanded operations to offer admission to students in five other school districts in Rusk County.

Ladysmith High School deals with a very high-risk population of students. A high number of students are involved with referrals to social services or have been adjudicated. Poverty is a problem: over 55 percent of the district's students are eligible for free or reduced lunch. Rusk County's child poverty rate is 20.8 percent. Ladysmith High School has a failure-to-graduate rate of 15 percent and each quarter one-third of the students fail one or more classes. The city of Ladysmith, with a population of 3,928, is the largest "metropolitan" area in Rusk county with the next largest city located almost 40 miles away. The isolation contributes to the high school becoming the largest social and academic center for the students.

With the need for additional educational programming clear, Ladysmith Evening Alternative School strives to meet these main objectives:

- to help nontraditional students obtain their high school diplomas through alternative curriculum programming, instructional strategies, and assessment methods;
- to provide prevention and intervention strategies that prevent pupils from becoming discouraged and alienated from the educational process;
- to provide the basic knowledge and necessary technology, employability, and living skills that students need to lead successful and independent lives after graduation; and
- to coordinate the efforts of school, community, and social services.

Ladysmith Evening Alternative School is a school-within-a-school and actually encompasses three programs: an evening alternative program, a daytime support program, and an expanded summer school program.

Evening Alternative Program

This program for eleventh- and twelfth-grade students and returning seniors serves between 15 and 20 students annually. Students qualify if they are receiving court services and are behind in credits, are school-aged parents at risk of not graduating with their class, are seniors needing credits to graduate, or are juniors two or more years behind in credits.

The Ladysmith Evening Alternative School provides additional opportunities to nontraditional learners who have struggled in the normal school setting. Class size in the charter school is smaller, allowing for self-paced or individual instruction. Students need to complete the same number and type of credits specified for graduation by school board policy as the regular high school students. Curricular material and instructional approach may differ. In addition to traditional academics, staff emphasize development of technology skills, career exploration, and independent living skills. Students can also earn credit for their on-the-job work experiences.

The Evening Alternative School is in session from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. daily and uses an integrated curriculum. Each student then develops an individual learning plan based on the integrated curriculum. Courses are organized to provide students with connections to real life and to prepare them for the work place. Learning in core subjects like science is supplemented through instruction at the local community college.

Students learn through hands-on application with smaller group learning and individualized instruction. One group project in the 1997-98 school year included establishing a cottage craft industry; students bought supplies, tracked their hours, paid themselves an hourly wage, calculated overhead and production costs, and sold their product at a 15 percent profit. The money that the students earned was then used for a group outing to a cultural event.

Staff evaluate student progress through portfolios, conferences, projects, and narrative style report cards.

Daytime Support Program

This program, offered during school hours by one reading specialist and the charter school coordinator, provides basic skills development among at-risk ninth- and tenth-grade students enrolled in regular education courses. The goal is prevention. The focus is on improving study skills, reading skills,

and writing skills. Students also meet five times per quarter with a high school counselor for small group sessions to discuss school success, performance, and self-esteem issues. Participating students are referred by parents, teachers, or middle school guidance staff, or are self-referred.

Expanded Summer School Program

The expanded summer school is open to all credit-deficient students at the high school level. Charter school staff oversee another 50-55 students in this program.

Credits for courses taken in the charter school are awarded in two different ways. The first is based on the traditional Carnegie Unit and seat time system with a certain amount of time allotted to each curricular subject. The second way is based on completion of a self-paced curriculum. Students earn both a mid-term and an end-of-quarter report. These reports indicate the number of hours earned and the student's progress in self-paced curriculum. In most cases the student earns a "Pass" or "Fail" grade for work completed. Students graduating from the charter school earn a regular Ladysmith High School diploma.

The regular high school principal is the administrator in charge of the charter school. A separate charter school coordinator directs day-to-day operations. The school is run by an advisory board that includes the high school principal, the charter school coordinator, a representative of Rusk County Social services, a Ladysmith police officer, two charter school students, two parents, one school board member, and the high school counselor. The advisory board meets four times per year to review progress.

Students must maintain a minimum 70 percent attendance record and an 80 percent course completion rating to remain enrolled. The school seeks to graduate 80 percent of the students who enroll. The charter school also employs an outside evaluator to monitor progress. Quarterly reviews are used to assure that students' needs are being met.

Table 9

Ladysmith-Hawkins Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	Ladysmith Evening Alternative School[1]		Ladysmith-Hawkins School District[2]	
Grades	10-12		10-12	
Total Enrollment	16		426	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	6	37.5	208	48.8
Females	10	62.5	218	51.2
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	0	0.0	6	1.4
Asians/Pacific Islanders	2	12.5	4	0.9
Blacks	0	0.0	2	0.5
Hispanics	0	0.0	0	0.0
Whites	14	87.5	414	97.2
At-Risk Students	14	87.5	data not available	
Learning Disabled[3]	0	0.0	15	3.5
Emotionally Disturbed[3]	0	0.0	14	3.3
Physically Handicapped[3]	0	0.0	1	0.2
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	12	75.0	695[4]	56.0[4]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[4]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI's Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

Affiliated Alternatives, Madison

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The Affiliated Alternatives charter school is the largest charter program in the state of Wisconsin, serving 388 at-risk students in grades 7 through 12 in six separate programs. Affiliated Alternatives utilizes "town meetings" to involve parents in important school decisions. Part of the school's mission is intense collaboration with youth services.

Approximately 40 percent of the school's students are African American or Hispanic, ethnic groups that have a disproportionately high dropout rate, and approximately one-third are from economically poor families. Affiliated Alternatives also serves many students returning to the district after expulsion, incarceration, or treatment. The charter programs have demonstrated excellent results in the areas of school climate, parent and student satisfaction, student engagement, and academic achievement.

The school follows the educational philosophy that remedial education is bankrupt, inadequate by definition because the longer students are in a slower learning class, the further behind the mainstream they will fall. School staff members believe that students who are behind must have an opportunity to accelerate learning using a higher order thinking skill curriculum that is similar to programming for talented and gifted students.

In the summer of 1997, Affiliated Alternatives became just one of three high schools nationwide to become accredited in the Accelerated Schools model through staff training at Stanford University. The model is fast-paced and actively engages the interest of students. It includes concepts, analysis, problem solving, and applications that emphasize the underlying reasoning related to learning. In the model, students draw conclusions from data, generalize and synthesize as they problem solve, and learn to monitor their own intellectual processes. The curriculum is enriched and integrated, as opposed to remedial, and designed so that all students, not just the brightest, meet a common set of objectives. By January of 1999, Affiliated Alternatives plans for all of its programs to meet the Accelerated Schools definition of powerful learning: authentic (draws on learner strengths and interests), interactive (collaboration among learners and with the real world), learner-centered (students construct knowledge through exploration and discovery), inclusive (all learners are engaged) and continuous (holistic learning in a variety of disciplines and learning environments).

Accelerated Learning Academy

ALA's four teachers serve 60 at-risk students in grades 7 through 10. The typical ALA student has both academic and social/psychological needs that the mainstream school setting cannot meet. The primary goals of the program are to increase academic skills and to prepare each student for a successful transition back to the mainstream or to another alternative program using the Stanford University Accelerated School model. This is accomplished in a school environment where students and parents feel a sense of belonging and where students are engaged in a fast-paced and challenging curriculum. Students cannot receive credit in a class unless they have 90 percent attendance and cannot remain in the program unless they pass five out of six classes. ALA merges the services of other schools, parents, community resources, and youth serving agencies into a single, coherent program. Students attend six classes per day, five of which are academic. The sixth class is aimed at artistic, social, and occupational development. ALA staff members expect students to perform and improve in three categories: achievement (improvements in reading and math are especially targeted), participation (attendance), and attitude/climate (behavior, commitment to school success).

Work and Learning Center

WLC serves 128 students who are at least 16 years old. Sixty-seven percent were dropouts who failed more than half their classes as freshmen and sophomores, but school staff recruited them for WLC so they would complete high school. The students said they had failed in school because they lacked support and guidance from adults at school and at home. The level of support that these students need cannot be feasibly provided within large high schools, but can be provided in smaller school settings that develop some of the functions and

dynamics of a successful family. WLC functions as two units of 65 students, each with four teachers. Students enter the program in groups of 16 and remain together through the program's two-year sequence. The academic program is organized around four themes, one for each semester of the two-year program: human interaction (child development, parenting, marriage and family); consumer competence (how to rent an apartment, balance a checkbook, get a job); citizenship and law (individual rights and responsibilities, government); and identity (discussion of world issues, personal decisions, post high school decisions). Each student also has an individualized math and literature program that relates to the semester's theme. The curriculum also incorporates the Stanford University Accelerated Schools model and aims to develop productive workers; personally competent adults in terms of living, social, and parenting skills; and informed and involved citizens. Career-related course work is supplemented with community-based employment training provided by business and industry. Within the context of high expectations for attendance and work completion, WLC emphasizes "social bonding," close affiliations within the instructional group and employers. Upon program completion, students receive diplomas from their home high schools.

The Cluster

The Cluster serves eight students of middle-school age, referred by an assistant superintendent because of behavior serious enough to exclude them from regular school settings, behaviors that could have led to expulsion. Students attend The Cluster only after a parent's request, as an opportunity in lieu of expulsion. The Cluster provides four hours per day of academics tailored to students' individual needs and six hours per day of activities fostering social development. Academics are provided in a "one-room school" with a single teacher and an assistant. The six-hour time block addresses the behaviors that led to the students being referred to The Cluster in the first place. Students are in The Cluster for up to one semester and then return to a regular or alternative school setting.

New Educational Opportunities and Networking

NEON offers academic, social, emotional, behavioral, and vocational opportunities to 15 eligible middle and high school students in the Madison Metropolitan School District. The charter program was started in the 1994-95 school year to meet the changing needs of students challenged with serious emotional disturbances. This program is founded on the belief that students with challenging behaviors can learn and make positive contributions to school and the community, and that programs should be made to fit students, rather than students to fit programs.

The program has four main desired outcomes, including: intensive multi-agency collaboration and participation with Dane County Health and Human Services; implementing a highly specialized and individualized curriculum that emphasizes vocational skills, life skills, conflict resolution, and academics; developing individualized student reintegration plans jointly with home, school, and NEON staff; and providing carefully planned, well-structured opportunities to participate in learning activities in community settings.

Students are expected to arrive at school on time and be prepared to work, to show respect for themselves and others through language and behavior, to abide by the rules for the variety of educational settings, and to demonstrate that they are willing to work hard to make progress.

School-Within-A-School

SWS serves 128 students who during the first two years of high school failed three or more courses, thus becoming credit deficient. At least one of the SWS sites will pilot a new mission: to serve students retained in ninth grade, one of the three highest priorities identified by the high school principals in Madison. The new mission is a preventative approach with a focus on overcoming academic skill deficiencies. The program functions as two units, each serving 64 students. Small class size contributes to development of a strong sense of community and to social bonding between teachers and students. Teachers are able to tailor work to the academic needs of individuals and to provide a level of support that is not possible in the mainstream school. Career development is a big focus; SWS provides a sequence of structured experiences, including training in employability skills, career counseling, tryout employment, and employer-sponsored on-the-job training.

School-Age Parent Program (SAPAR)

SAPAR provides quality academics, parenting education, and support services to teen mothers. The academic component uses a thematic and interdisciplinary curriculum. Teachers and students jointly determine themes and develop them into an

academic course of study. For most SAPAR students the near future also involves managing a household as well as holding a job. Students are prepared for these complex and multiple roles through work with a support team that includes teachers, a social worker, a school nurse, daycare center staff, and a variety of other community resources.

Affiliated Alternative Charter School's six programs were based on two core theoretical perspectives, social bonding theory and opportunity theory. These theories are derived from the belief that critical elements are missing in the lives of some youth, leading to problems such as delinquency and dropping out of school. Youths miss the sense of bonding—belonging, affiliation, commitment—necessary to maintain the motivation to succeed in school. Also missing is the perception that school is a viable route to future opportunity. The Affiliated Alternatives have, therefore, constructed school environments and activities that encourage social bonding and demonstrate to students the direct correlation between success in school and future opportunity.

This approach to education for the at-risk population is innovative and successful, as indicated by the Affiliated Alternatives waiting list. Approximately 120 students are waiting to enter one of the six charter programs.

Table 10

Affiliated Alternatives, Madison Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	Affiliated Alternatives[1]		Madison Metropolitan School District[2]	
Grades	7-12		7-12	
Total Enrollment	388		11,236	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	167	43.0	5,801	51.6
Females	221	57.0	5,435	48.4
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	6	1.5	70	0.6
Asians/Pacific Islanders	19	4.9	847	7.5
Blacks	124	32.0	1,699	15.1
Hispanics	24	6.2	471	4.2
Whites	215	55.4	8,149	72.6
At-Risk Students	369	95.1	data not available	
Learning Disabled[3]	10	2.6	763	6.8
Emotionally Disturbed[3]	29	7.5	281	2.5
Physically Handicapped[3]	0	0.0	38	0.3
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	132	34.0	6,521[4]	26.0[4]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[4]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI's Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

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James C. Wright Middle School, Madison

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Art Rainwater, District Administrator
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(608) 266-6235

The James C. Wright Charter Middle School, named for one of Madison's civil rights pioneers, is a school of choice for 200 students in grades 6 through 8. The board of education established Wright as a charter in 1994 as a solution to severe overcrowding in the city's middle schools that resulted in the under-achievement of many students from South Madison, the only area of the city without a nearby middle school. In 1997, Wright moved to a new custom-designed building in South Madison that can accommodate up to 240 students.

Enrollment at James C. Wright is open to all students who reside in the West High School attendance area. Wright's current population is diverse. Seventy-one percent of students are from racial/ethnic minorities, including African American, Hmong, Hispanic. Forty-eight percent are from low income families, and just 45 percent live at home with both parents. In addition to regular education classes, Wright offers special programming for students with learning and emotional disabilities. Most special education students are mainstreamed and participate fully in the curriculum.

With an ethnically and culturally diverse staff and innovative and flexible ways of teaching, the school provides its students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence required to participate fully in an evolving global society. School staff members accomplish this goal through its three major themes: integrated curriculum, integrated technology, and integrated community.

Integrated/Thematic Curriculum

James C. Wright Middle School uses teacher-teaming as a method of integrating a curriculum of core topics such as math, science, social studies, and language arts. A team of two or three academic teachers stays with the same group of students throughout the year. The team of teachers also consults with music and physical education instructors to further integrate the curriculum into theme units. The staff's goal is to focus on basics and prepare the students for success in a rigorous high school program while offering exposure and experience in many other areas, such as the arts and technology. Wright also offers courses in foreign language, art, communication, learning strategies, band, strings, and vocal music, as well as an expanding program of extracurricular activities and clubs.

Over the last two years, teachers at Wright have pioneered the development and use of performance assessments. For example, earlier in the 1997-98 school year, in English class, students were asked to write a letter in response to the question, "How would it feel to be principal of James C. Wright Middle School for a day?" Their papers were holistically scored and instruction tailored to address these common errors:

- spelling (class-by-class spelling lists were created);
- usage (there, they're, their, there's);
- format (no return address); and
- a common comma fault (setting off parenthetical material).

Based on student performance and need, the curriculum undergoes continuing change and improvement.

Class size is limited to 20 students in most cases to provide for personalized attention. This limited enrollment means easy access to all of the technology tools and other resources, and fosters a sense of connection among students, teachers, and parents.

Integrated Technology

The school's staff believes that students must have the technology tools to compete in tomorrow's world. Students must become proficient in using the computer as a learning tool. State-of-the-art resources are available to all students as part of their daily activities. From on-line data searches, to distance learning, to word-processing notes and class reports, each student employs technology routinely. All students have appropriate Internet access and personal e-mail accounts.

Students in the computer club designed a very detailed virtual tour of the school that provides information about the staff, facilities, and curriculum. This virtual tour will be available on the school's website at the start of the 1998-99 school year.

James C. Wright Middle School has a four-to-

one student to computer ratio, twice the district average. The school has two computer labs, computers in its learning center, and two computers in every classroom.

Integrated Community

There is strong community emphasis. Students learn to be socially responsible through community service and worldwide service projects. Contacts are maintained with the business community, the university, cultural and community resources, and social agencies.

Wright's location at the center of Madison enables it to be an effective broker of community partnerships to enhance its educational program. Wright has developed partnerships with Henry Vilas Zoo, the University of Wisconsin/Madison Space Place, Dean Clinic, St. Mary's Health Center, and Madison Newspapers, Inc. Wright's proximity to the wild areas of Wingra Creek and the University of Wisconsin/Madison Arboretum enables students to intimately study native plants, birds, and animals. These partnerships provide the students with tutoring, mentoring, and job-shadowing opportunities.

This charter school is also characterized by its participatory decision-making methods and its active parent group. The school is run by a "Core Group," which oversees four standing committees, including the school climate, budget and personnel, curriculum, and booster committees. Membership on all of these committees includes school staff members, parents, and student representatives.

Table 11

James C. Wright Middle School, Madison Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	James C. Wright Middle School[1]		Madison Metropolitan School District[2]	
Grades	6-8		6-8	
Total Enrollment	178		5,647	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	93	52.3	2,900	51.4
Females	85	47.7	2,747	48.6
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	0	0.0	35	0.6
Asians/Pacific Islanders	15	8.4	480	8.5
Blacks	103	57.8	948	16.8
Hispanics	9	5.1	274	4.9
Whites	51	28.7	3,910	69.2
At-Risk Students	0	0.0	data not available	
Learning Disabled[3]	32	18.0	419	7.4
Emotionally Disturbed[3]	8	4.5	112	2.0
Physically Handicapped[3]	0	0.0	19	0.3
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	84	47.2	6,521[4]	26.0[4]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[4]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI's Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

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Middleton Alternative Senior High (M.A.S.H.)

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Middleton-Cross Plains Area Schools
Steve Koch, District Administrator
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Middleton Alternative Senior High (M.A.S.H.) started in 1993 as a program for at-risk juniors and seniors and achieved charter status in May 1995. Since then, the program has expanded to serve more than 90 at-risk students in grades 10 through 12. Eight full- and part-time staff operate the M.A.S.H. facility, located within walking distance of the main high school.

The program objectives include making students aware of the importance of attendance for success in school and on the job and encouraging students to develop organizational skills and a sense of personal commitment to excellence. Students learn to identify and utilize their individual talents and learning styles by becoming aware of the relationship between choices and consequences, and the relationship among school, community, work, and career opportunities. Communications skills and independent living skills are emphasized.

The staff at M.A.S.H. strive for student success through an environment and curriculum that is:

- flexible;
- accommodates needs, learning styles, ability levels, and interest of each student;
- encourages cooperative learning;
- is project-oriented;
- engages multiple intelligences; and
- fosters the development of self-esteem.

The curriculum of the charter school is designed to meet the needs of each individual student. M.A.S.H. staff offer a variety of classes for academic or general credit, focusing on the 16 core credits of the regular district curriculum. Students have the option of taking their seven elective credits at Middleton High School. Many students attend the M.A.S.H. program exclusively, while some may attend only one class and then return to the main high school for selected courses. Students have flexibility in scheduling their school day that would not be possible outside of the charter program.

Within the M.A.S.H. program, each teacher serves as instructor/advisor to 15 students. M.A.S.H. students are responding well to the smaller classroom environment. Teachers report that their students have the skills, but histories of truancy, homelessness, substance abuse, and broken homes and families have stolen their attentions away from schooling. Teachers agree that they spend as much time outside of the classroom counseling students as they do in the classroom on academics, a fact that makes their job more difficult, but infinitely more rewarding than teaching in a traditional classroom.

Students attend M.A.S.H. for a five-hour block of time each day. While schedules tend to be highly individualized, all students are required to be present for the Life Skills portion of instruction. During the academic portion of instruction, students pursue credit in areas where they may be deficient, including social studies, math, English, science, speech, and health/physical education. In the 1997-98 school year, student interest led to the development of a film production class and an editing studio, offerings that support the staff's effort to increase exposure to computers and modern technology.

The final component of the M.A.S.H. program is work experience, where students may receive one half or one full credit depending on the number of hours they work. Credit is also given for voluntary community service.

In the 1997-98 school year, M.A.S.H. also expanded to include two new programs. The "Employability Skills" program focuses on older students working toward their high school equivalency diploma or general equivalency diploma. The program is designed to develop basic skills and work skills. The "Dreams" program for tenth-grade students focuses on English, study skills, and coping skills.

Future plans for M.A.S.H. include developing a night school program that targets students who have been truant, in treatment, or placed in corrections. The program would develop skills necessary for reentry into an academic setting and the attainment of credits through a self-paced, computer-based curriculum.

M.A.S.H. has a grading policy of "A," "B," "C," or no credit. To receive a passing grade, students must complete all work at a "C" level or better. This has enabled M.A.S.H. students to become more responsible for their own academic work and has helped them earn better grades than in past high school experiences. The point of this system is to help students understand that they must complete all work satisfactorily. Students through the fifth year of high school

may be referred to the M.A.S.H. program by Middleton High School administrators, guidance counselors, and staff. Referrals are based on a student being at risk, credit deficient, a teen parent, adjudicated delinquent, or dropout. M.A.S.H. staff members evaluate the student's transcript and attendance record and interview the student before deciding to admit him or her. Students who are not admitted are placed on a waiting list until an opening is available.

Assessment and evaluation of student progress is based on attendance, participation in class activities, satisfactory completion of all class work, and completion of portfolio requirements. Other means of assessment include oral presentation, journal, report, and essay writing, and multi-media demonstrations. M.A.S.H. is also working to develop graduation standards independent of the main high school. The school monitors its own success in achieving its objectives through the use of improved student attendance and behavior, earned academic credits, graduation, annual student surveys, and reports to the school board. The program is proud that some former students have returned to become volunteer tutors.

The administration of the charter school is site-managed whenever decisions affect only the M.A.S.H. program. The four full-time teachers rotate annually in the role of program coordinator. Collaborative administrative decisions are made when they affect the regular high school program. A Middleton High School assistant principal is directly responsible for M.A.S.H. and serves as a liaison between the M.A.S.H. staff and the district administration and board of education.

Table 12

M.A.S.H., Middleton-Cross Plains Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	Middleton Alternative Senior High (M.A.S.H.)[1]		Middleton-Cross Plains Area Schools[2]	
Grades	10-12		10-12	
Total Enrollment	100		1,163	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	44	44.0	579	49.8
Females	56	56.0	584	50.2
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	1	1.0	3	0.3
Asians/Pacific Islanders	0	0.0	32	2.8
Blacks	5	5.0	28	2.4
Hispanics	4	4.0	24	2.0
Whites	90	90.0	1,076	92.5
At-Risk Students	75	75.0	data not available	
Learning Disabled[3]	1	1.0	52	4.5
Emotionally Disturbed[3]	3	3.0	27	2.3
Physically Handicapped[3]	1	1.0	1	0.1
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	17	17.0	488[4]	10.0[4]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[4]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI's Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

Highland Community School, Milwaukee

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In 1996 Highland Community School became Milwaukee's first charter school. Highland is a neighborhood-based, parent-run, early childhood Montessori program for up to 85 children age three through third grade. The school has a 29-year record of helping children and families succeed. The school's mission is to provide quality Montessori education and a nurturing environment for an economically and culturally diverse group of children on Milwaukee's west side, to empower parents to become responsible for and involved with their children's education, and to be a force for change in the community and society.

Highland attributes its success to the unique aspects of its program. First, it is a community-based neighborhood school with a philosophy of providing support and stability for the entire family. Second, it offers a Montessori curriculum, which nurtures each child's inborn desire to learn and follows the natural path of a child's development. Third, Highland is parent-run, giving it the maximum flexibility possible under the Wisconsin charter school law in the area of governance and decision making. Highland is recognized as a model for parent involvement and empowerment throughout the community.

The Montessori program is a proven approach in high demand among Milwaukee's parents. Highland's students score well above average on standardized tests. A main goal is to help children become independent thinkers who will make a difference in the community and the world. Highland's educational plan details goals and action plans for achievement in five academic areas of emphasis: math, scientific reasoning, communication, community membership, and the arts. This educational plan guides course activities in three program areas that follow Dr. Maria Montessori's planes of child development.

Absorbent Mind

The first program area, Children's House, serves children ages three to five. Dr. Montessori called this the period of the "absorbent mind." Young children are exploding into learning, gaining independence, and mastering skills. The focus at this level is on aiding the child's development of personal responsibility and self-esteem in a safe, nurturing environment. Freedom of movement in the classroom enables the child to work alone or with one or two others. Classroom materials aid the development of the senses, and language and mathematical skills. Learning goes on through discovery, exploration, and cooperation with others. Older children are models and helpers for younger children.

Cosmic Mind

The second program, Extended Day, serves five-year-olds who have made the transition to the second plane of development, the "cosmic mind." This phase is characterized by a dramatic shift from wanting to do everything alone to wanting to do everything with a group of friends. Five afternoons per week, five-year-olds attend the Extended Day program and participate in group activities such as cooking, building, camping, swimming, skating, and exploration of museums. The program helps to prepare children for the transition from Children's House to the Junior Level, or for the adjustment to elementary school.

Social Awakening and Responsibility

The Junior Level serves children ages six to nine as they enter the age of "social awakening and responsibility." Children insist on justice and fair play and they need to know exact rules. They search for the why and how of things. They want to know what is good and bad. They develop an appreciation of the value of things. Students use their basic skills to study and report on topics of their choosing. The curriculum builds on basic academic skills including reading, writing, math, and science.

Highland's curriculum focuses on correlating work to real life. Students develop a sense of responsibility through the practical life materials used in the Children's House. In Extended Day, they begin to take responsibility for classroom chores. This later extends to taking responsibility for the school and neighborhood in the Junior Level program.

Regular visits from community leaders help students learn more about the relationship between work and real life.

Highland is located in the former Schlitz mansion, a Victorian style building that in its history was also a boarding house for black musicians and a nunnery. Although completely renovated with new offices and a computer lab on the second floor, the building has not lost its home-like atmosphere. The basement has been renovated to become a dining room, where an on-staff cook prepares meals daily. Students eat at tables set with white linens and dine family style, allowing them to practice their etiquette for periodic outings to fancy restaurants.

Highland was founded by parents who wanted meaningful involvement in their children's education. Today, that principle sustains the school. Each parent is required to provide 36 hours of volunteer time each year. Two-parent families provide 72 hours per year. Monthly education nights help parents develop the leadership skills they need to become advocates for their children's education.

A nine-member parent board of directors governs Highland. Each member is elected by a majority vote of the parents and serves a three-year term. This process ensures that parents retain their role as owners and operators of the school. Parents make all the decisions that affect their child's education. The board hires and fires the executive director and principal, sets and carries out policy decisions, and is responsible for the school's financial well-being. The parent board of directors has seven standing committees: admissions, finance, fund raising, nurturing/education, operations, parent involvement, and personnel. The executive director oversees daily operation of the school.

Highland is truly a community effort charter school with a dedicated, highly trained staff that is committed to educating students, parents, and the public on the importance and benefits of early childhood education.

Table 13

Highland, Milwaukee Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	Highland Community School[1]		Milwaukee Public Schools[2]	
Grades	age 3 to grade 3		K4 to grade 3	
Total Enrollment	65		39,968	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	31	47.7	20,459	51.2
Females	34	52.3	19,509	48.8
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	0	0.0	407	1.0
Asians/Pacific Islanders	1	1.5	1,699	4.3
Blacks	51	78.5	24,770	62.0
Hispanics	2	3.1	5,307	13.3
Whites	11	16.9	7,785	19.4
At-Risk Students	at risk students not identifed until grade 5			
Learning Disabled[3]	1	1.5	955	2.4
Emotionally Disturbed[3]	0	0.0	396	1.0
Physically Handicapped[3]	0	0.0	353	0.9
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	42	64.6	73,642[4]	73.0[4]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[4]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI's Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

Kickapoo River Institute

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The Kickapoo River Institute is a bio-regional learning experience that serves high school students in four rural districts in southwestern Wisconsin. It is the first charter school in Wisconsin to build its curriculum completely around the environment. This corner of Wisconsin is home to an eclectic way of life: small family-run dairy farms, vibrant Amish communities, home-based businesses, artist studios, hunting and fishing retreats, and small villages. At this school, the natural boundaries of the Kickapoo Watershed have replaced traditional classroom walls.

The charter school began operation in the 1997-98 school year with just 21 students. The school will add a class each year until the 1999-2000 school year to round out its charter of 65-70 students in grades 9 through 12.

The school is committed to its mission to uphold the ecological integrity of the Kickapoo Valley bio-region by sustaining a learning community characterized by innovative interdisciplinary teaching, local research, and civic responsiveness.

The school is based on the philosophy that community is an authentic site of learning, that the ecological place we call home frames this learning, and that an innovative learning community is best achieved by constructing a small school. The Kickapoo River Institute's "pedagogy of place" philosophy and curriculum is cultivating a network of learning sites and relationships throughout the Kickapoo Valley and bringing school and community together on a common path of lifelong learning. It is teaching by using the landscape, family, and community surroundings as the educational foundation, and it embraces four major tenets:

- nature teaches;
- understanding place is indispensable to community;
- where and how a student learns is as vital as what a student learns; and
- respect is integral to learning.

Significant learning takes place outdoors and in the community. The learning community expands outward from local landscape and home, to regional realities, to international issues. The staff, students, and parents of this charter school believe that in coming to know one's place, one comes to know what is fundamental to all places. The goal is for students to graduate and use their knowledge to better their social and ecological communities.

The curriculum is innovative in the way it blends core subjects into an integrated studies program. Through individualized learning plans and thematic instruction, each student studies the following seven courses every year, though at increasingly complex levels:

- Nature and Society
- Bio-Geography of the Kickapoo Valley
- Tools, Technology, and Thermodynamics
- Economics, Ecology, and Energy
- Healthy People, Healthy Places
- Foundations: Reading, Research, and Writing
- Spanish

With the exception of Spanish, which is taught daily over the course of four years with additional travel and immersion experiences, courses are taught one at a time, with 15 to 25 academic days dedicated to each course. Core subjects like math, English and social studies are integrated into the teaching of these topics.

Students spend over one-third of their time outdoors at multiple learning sites, making the Kickapoo River Watershed the primary classroom. A typical day in this school is unlike that in any other. The students seem more like a close-knit family than a class. Mornings may be spent charting river flows from measurements they took on the river the day before. A visiting math teacher teaches students how to use the Pythagorean theorem to study the flow of the river. The first semester included 25 to 30 work trips to the Mississippi Valley Archaeology center, the Vernon County Land Conservation Office, and a local farm. Students work with wildlife biologists, soil conservationists, foresters, and trout habitat specialists. Community experts become teachers. Students hike to the top of a dolomite outcropping for an English class, apply their Spanish to describe what they saw in a prairie of wildflowers, and sit along the Kickapoo River for a lecture on the hydrologic cycle. Physical education and team-building courses include canoeing instruction on the river and a ropes course. This

immersion in the outdoors is the biggest difference between the Kickapoo River Institute and traditional classrooms. While the students have sometimes missed the comforts of a traditional classroom, they still prefer knocking around the countryside, learning from the land.

The sciences are also taught through field study efforts utilizing existing bio-regional projects as active laboratories. The school is looking at managing a stand of timber, working on trout habitat, conducting research with a wetlands habitat project, and putting together a cultural history of the lower Kickapoo region.

Students cook their own lunch at school and in the field, made from ingredients that their classmates bring in. The lead teacher/coordinator complains happily that he has to drag his students away from their work to eat lunch.

The Kickapoo River Institute uses several means of assessing student progress. Traditional letter grades are used, as are standard assessment tests. Parents, students, and teachers convene for conferences two times annually to review portfolios. In addition, students give a community presentation each year, demonstrating their abilities and reporting on projects. Students earn a regular high school diploma.

A seven-person council that includes parents, teachers, and community members, guides the school through its curriculum, schedule, and daily operations. The charter school seeks and welcomes strong parent and community involvement.

Table 14

Kickapoo River Institute, North Crawford Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	Kickapoo River Institute[1]		North Crawford School District[2]	
Grades	9-10		9-10	
Total Enrollment	19		259	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	10	52.6	136	52.5
Females	9	47.4	123	47.5
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	0	0.0	0	0.0
Asians/Pacific Islanders	0	0.0	0	0.0
Blacks	0	0.0	1	0.4
Hispanics	0	0.0	4	1.5
Whites	19	100.0	254	98.1
At-Risk Students	4	21.0	data not available	
Learning Disabled[3]	1	5.3	4	1.5
Emotionally Disturbed[3]	1	5.3	2	0.8
Physically Handicapped[3]	0	0.0	data not available	
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	data not available		235[4]	35.0[4]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[4]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI's Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

Teachers Educating, Advising, and Mentoring Students (T.E.A.M.S.), Stevens Point

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T.E.A.M.S. (Teachers Educating, Advising, and Mentoring Students) is a school-within-a-school, serving 98 sophomores, juniors, and beginning in the 1998-99 school year, seniors. The charter school shares library, gymnasium, cafeteria, administrative, guidance, extra-curricular and transportation services with Stevens Point Area Senior High School (SPASH).

A survey gauging parental satisfaction indicated that a majority of parents think SPASH is overcrowded and that there is a need for more teacher/parent contact and teacher/student advisory relationships. The results led to the development of the T.E.A.M.S. charter school.

T.E.A.M.S. truly serves a diverse population of students, many of whom are "nontraditional learners." Students benefit from more individual attention and a group-oriented, academically integrated, participatory environment. T.E.A.M.S. is a full-inclusion, academic program with high expectations for all students enrolled. About 20 percent of the students have disabilities, including cognitive, learning, emotional, and physical handicaps. The program also includes middle-ground and top-end students. T.E.A.M.S. is not an "at-risk" or "alternative" program; in fact, Stevens Point has a completely separate alternative school that serves at-risk teenagers, including those returning to school from the judicial system or other forms of behavioral rehabilitation. Students volunteer for the T.E.A.M.S. style of learning.

The T.E.A.M.S. staff encourages students to become lifelong learners through three major program components:

Academic

Integrated learning and team teaching are the biggest difference between the T.E.A.M.S. curriculum and its counterpart in the traditional SPASH high school. Instructors meet weekly to evaluate student needs and to integrate their subject areas in the teaching of a common theme or unit Students may read *The Scarlet Letter* in English and study about the Puritans in early America in history. Students studied the ebola virus in biology class while they were assigned to read *The Hot Zone*, a best seller that graphically describes the killer virus. Since the school is located so close to the Wisconsin River, future plans include a river unit. Ecology lessons might include taking water samples to determine the effects of local industry on the river; history classes might cover the role of the river in the development of towns and businesses; other courses might include touring a local paper mill to emphasize the importance of the river to industry. Students learn how to learn through total immersion in interesting topics.

Use of block scheduling provides for flexibility in class size and length, making possible individualized instruction, special projects, or labs. In addition, some lessons are held in an "all-call" format in which the students and staff participate in a large group activity.

Sophomores are at T.E.A.M.S. for three hours a day, taking English, biology, social studies, and a career exploration course known as "World of Work." Juniors attend for two hours a day and take an integrated social studies and language arts class called "Social Awareness," ecology, and "World of Work." Seniors attend for one hour a day, focusing largely on independent studies, "World of Work," and community service projects.

World of Work

In this component, students receive credit for work experience in the business community and for volunteer service. This program also includes in-school instruction in resumé writing, interviewing techniques, and leadership development. Elements of this program component are integrated into the academic component wherever possible.

Social skills and teamwork skills necessary in the work environment are also developed through an adventure education curriculum. T.E.A.M.S. students learn to work as a team and brainstorm solutions to obstacles on a low ropes course. An on-site indoor climbing wall encourages self-confidence in overcoming obstacles. Students then advance to a high ropes course that they must conquer as a team.

Students have also formed their own committees connected with the World of Work course. A web-page committee is working in the new T.E.A.M.S. computer lab to put information about

the program on the Internet. The site will link to the national charter schools site and to a homework page. A T.E.A.M.S. career fair committee is planning an exposition for the entire school, bringing in representatives from businesses and schools.

Advisory

The staff's daily schedule includes five hours of teaching and a flexible advisory hour, a time used for academic counseling, parental contact, and discussion of social and personal issues that may be keeping the student from focusing on learning.

Through this curriculum and method of teaching, T.E.A.M.S. hopes to achieve its stated goals, which are to:

- promote concern for fellow human beings;
- encourage high academic standards and career preparation;
- promote the ability to get things done and to work smoothly with others;
- value self-motivation as a way to learn, participate, and grow;
- increase a sense of competence, self-esteem, confidence, and self-awareness;
- value challenging experiences that include risk-taking and enterprising initiatives;
- increase a sense of usefulness to a larger community;
- increase a sense of responsibility to a group or class;
- promote assertiveness and independence; and
- develop skills needed for effective problem solving.

Four full-time teachers share all decision-making responsibility and rotate annually in the position of program coordinator. Staff are working to add two interns, students from the University of Wisconsin, Stevens Point, to the team. The SPASH principal serves as the T.E.A.M.S. administrator.

All of T.E.A.M.S.' efforts focus on the definitive goal of giving students the problem-solving and critical-thinking skills necessary to cope with the challenges they will face as adults. Students are encouraged to become lifelong learners and to desire further vocational or academic education, and to become positive contributors to the community.

Table 15

T.E.A.M.S., Stevens Point Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	T.E.A.M.S.[1]		Stevens Point Area School District[2]	
Grades	10-11		10-11	
Total Enrollment	98		2,055	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	42	42.8	1,037	50.5
Females	56	57.2	1,018	49.5
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	0	0.0	14	0.7
Asians/Pacific Islanders	1	1.0	122	5.9
Blacks	2	2.0	21	1.0
Hispanics	2	2.0	38	1.9
Whites	93	95.0	1,860	90.5
At-Risk Students	10	10.2	data not available	
Learning Disabled[3]	15	15.3	74	3.6
Emotionally Disturbed[3]	2	2.0	23	1.1
Physically Handicapped[3]	3	3.1	4	0.2
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	5	5.1	1,798[4]	22.0[4]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[4]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI's Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

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Core Knowledge Charter School, Verona

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Verona Core Knowledge Charter School (CKCS) is a school of choice for 242 students in kindergarten through eighth grade. Charter classes are located at three separate sites. Kindergarten through second grade are located at Stoner Prairie Elementary School in Fitchburg. Grades 3 through 5 are at Savanna Oaks Elementary School, next to Stoner Prairie Elementary School. Grades 6, 7, and 8 are at Verona Area Middle School.

CKCS follows a rigorous curriculum that focuses on core academics. After extensive study, parent organizers chose the Core Knowledge Sequence and Direct Instruction for CKCS's educational program. The Core Knowledge Sequence identifies the subject matter to be covered in literature, science, geography, history, art, and music. The Direct Instruction program prescribes the content and instructional method teachers use for reading, math, spelling, and writing. These are carefully sequenced and coordinated programs built on skills learned in prior years.

Core Knowledge Sequence

The Core Knowledge Sequence is based on the belief that basic background knowledge is necessary for students to develop needed skills, such as critical thinking, persuasive speech and writing, and reasoning and analysis. The Core Knowledge Sequence is not a list of facts to be memorized; rather, it is a guide to coherent content from grade to grade, designed to encourage steady academic progress as children build their knowledge and skills from one year to the next. The Core Knowledge Sequence is distinguished by its specificity, but it specifies only a coherent minimum; the teacher remains free to decide when to go into depth and detail beyond what is recommended in the sequence.

The philosophy of the Core Knowledge Sequence is also based on the concept of cultural literacy. Cultural literacy is the shared knowledge that allows the members of a society to communicate efficiently. A broad base of knowledge promotes a common understanding in communication between generations, races, cultures, and political parties, no matter where students are educated. For example, being able to put content such as the Battle of Bull Run, Doppler effect, and Indian summer into context will prepare students to read, write, speak, and listen in a literate society. CKCS's staff members believe this holds true for all levels of ability and socioeconomic background. The Core Knowledge Sequence builds the cultural literacy that enhances communication for a lifetime.

Direct Instruction

Direct Instruction complements the Core Knowledge Sequence and is based on the belief that every child can learn when the instruction is appropriate. Failure of a child to learn is a problem with the instruction, not the child. The focus is on the teacher directing the instruction through modeling, frequent student response, and immediate feedback. Direct Instruction is a method of teaching essential academic skills (reading) and strategies (phonics), yet it is also a course of study guiding the school's reading, math, spelling, and language arts instruction through the sixth grade. Direct Instruction has been thoroughly researched in the classroom since the 1960s and has been shown to be very effective among all students, particularly learning disabled, slow learners, and at-risk students.

Subject matter in the Direct Instruction programs is organized in a structure known as track sequencing, which introduces various skills simultaneously. Several skills are addressed each day, allowing the student to practice new skills over an extended period of time. This in turn leads to continued improvement of the skills.

Direct Instruction programs teach learning strategies, rather than isolated bits of information. Teachers break all skills down into smaller component skills that receive highly explicit, teacher-guided attention when they are introduced. Students are shown how these subskills connect with larger strategies. They learn to generalize about these strategies, and then they exercise those generalizations in problem-solving situations. For example, in spelling, children who learn 600 word parts called "morphographs" and three rules for connecting them can spell 12,000 words. Children

rehearse the 600 word parts and three rules to a level of familiarity that allows them to spell the 12,000 words with ease. Emphasis in the instruction shifts from teacher-directed practice to fully independent application. This Direct Instruction design has been applied to higher order skills, such as deductive and inductive reasoning in history, literary analysis, chemistry, legal reasoning, problem solving, and critical thinking.

Another feature of Direct Instruction is that every child is an active participant throughout each lesson, not just when it's his or her turn. The result is a high energy classroom in which learning is vigorous, active, and constant.

CKCS uses multi-age grouping in conjunction with the Core Knowledge Sequence and Direct Instruction to promote student success. Reading and math are taught to students grouped by ability. Continuous monitoring of student performance indicates when placement changes need to be made.

Parent involvement is another main difference in the charter schools in Verona. Parents initiated CKCS. This charter school also emphasizes the parents' role as the primary teacher of morals and personal values. School staff expect students to show good manners, courtesy, and respect for others.

The charter school is managed by a seven-member governing council comprised of five parents, the school's director, and one teacher. The director oversees daily operations and works with the principals at each school site. A curriculum coordinator focuses on providing leadership and training in the implementation of Core Knowledge Sequence and Direct Instruction curricula.

Table 16

Core Knowledge, Verona Enrollment Data

Description of 1997-98 Student Population	Core Knowledge Charter School[1]		Verona Area School District[2]	
Grades	K-8		K-8	
Total Enrollment	236		2,835	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	120	50.9	1,462	51.6
Females	116	49.1	1,373	48.4
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	0	0.0	14	0.5
Asians/Pacific Islanders	1	0.4	76	2.7
Blacks	3	1.3	183	6.5
Hispanics	4	1.7	58	2.0
Whites	228	96.6	2,504	88.3
At-Risk Students	0	0.0	data not available	
Learning Disabled[3]	6	2.5	111	3.9
Emotionally Disturbed[3]	0	0.0	29	1.0
Physically Handicapped[3]	1	0.4	3	0.1
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	data not available		440[4]	11.0[4]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[4]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI's Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

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New Century School, Verona

420 Church Street
Verona, WI 53593
June Coleman
(608) 845-2574

Verona Area School District
Robert Gilpatrick, District Administrator
700 N. Main Street
Verona, WI 53593
(608) 845-6451

The New Century School in Verona was Wisconsin's first parent-initiated, elementary-level charter school. It serves 73 children in five multi-age classrooms: three for kindergartners and first-graders, one for second- and third-graders, and one for fourth- and fifth-graders.

The New Century School was founded as a partnership for learning among students, teachers, and parents. Its goal is to nurture the child's continuous progress and independence as a lifelong learner through an integrated curriculum emphasizing science and math. New Century School's staff believe this overall approach best meets a changing world where familiarity with science and math is vital, and where working cooperatively in groups and independently on individual initiative are all important.

Integrated Curriculum

The curriculum is approached in an integrated, thematic manner so that students see how subjects fit together and that solving problems requires many talents. The teaching staff meets before the beginning of each school year to choose the science-based theme units. The students' interests are also considered when planning the theme units. The goal is to have different classrooms focus on different parts of the same theme simultaneously, allowing teachers to work together and students to be challenged.

The curriculum stresses basic elementary academics such as language arts, related arts (music, art, physical education), social studies, science, math, and foreign language. The curriculum is based on the district's K-5 guidelines for elementary skills; teachers then use various instructional methods to teach these skills. Emphasis is on using acquired skills in the problem-solving process, not on whether the answer is correct. The process of understanding, learning why an answer is correct, is the focus.

Math and science are emphasized through hands-on activities, projects, use of computers, and laboratory time. This approach encourages children to explore, investigate, and manipulate the world around them. Each winter, students work on an "I wonder" project, a school-wide cooperative project using the inquiry-based method for research. Math and science are also emphasized through ongoing community partnerships with science-oriented businesses.

Twice-weekly Spanish instruction is a standard part of the curriculum for all children in New Century School as a means to better understand various cultures and to encourage diversity and awareness.

Multi-age Classrooms and Cooperative Learning

Research shows that the multi-age format works well for all children in the class. Multi-age classrooms encourage older children to demonstrate their knowledge to younger children and younger children to achieve what the older children have achieved, bolstering the self-confidence of all students in the classroom. This format is based on the premise that students may progress rapidly ahead of traditional grade-level expectations in some areas while needing more time in others. In this environment, students can work at their own pace and still be with their peers. Different learning styles and needs can be accommodated.

Learning is a cooperative effort at New Century. The basic philosophy is that children, teachers, and parents enter into a partnership of learning. Success in learning stems from individual achievement and cooperative learning with peers. Group learning encourages cooperative competition and teaches necessary social skills. This is a very social approach to learning. Continuous progress learning helps a child learn according to his or her developmental ability and not strictly according to age or grade. Children are assigned to classrooms according to individual readiness. At the start of each new academic year, children see their learning as directly continuing from the previous year.

Team Teaching

The multi-age classes are team-taught, and the same team of teachers stays with the children for two years. Team teaching enables the teachers to assess children's progress in a broad range of activities and to establish goals for individual children, while allowing the child a clearly understood agenda of

expectations and responsibilities. A number of years spent in the same classroom with the same teachers and classmates makes achievement easier to recognize by both student and teacher. This system offers the children consistency and continuity.

New Century School assesses students based on performance. The system is noncompetitive and noncomparative and relies heavily on goals agreed upon by the teacher, parent, and child. Because children are in a multi-age environment, the progress made toward a particular skill is not necessarily the same as other children in the classroom. The goal is for children to complete the K-5 curriculum skills outlined by the district without emphasizing the path or the amount of time they take. The focus is on the individual strengths and needs of each child.

Parent involvement has been crucial to the school's success. Parents and teachers work closely with students in designing goals, developing the curriculum, and governing the school. Communication is the foundation of the school's behavior plan. Parents are responsible for teaching their children about responsible behavior and consequences. Students are expected to use self-discipline to prioritize their job of learning.

New Century School is governed by a site council, a consensus-style, decision-making body. Subcommittees include budget, personnel, public relations, assessment, and the teachers' curriculum committee. All subcommittees are comprised of parents and must have at least one teacher. The lead teacher and parent coordinator handle day-to-day operations. At the end of each school year, the site council meets for an extended retreat to assess the completed year and to set goals for the upcoming year.

New Century School's enrollment is representative of the district's elementary school population, drawing from all of the district's 13 neighborhoods to create a balanced and diverse body of students. New Century School monitors its program's success through extensive parent surveys, committee reports, and program assessments. Response has been favorable, enthusiastic, and supportive.

Table 17

New Century School, Verona Enrollment Data

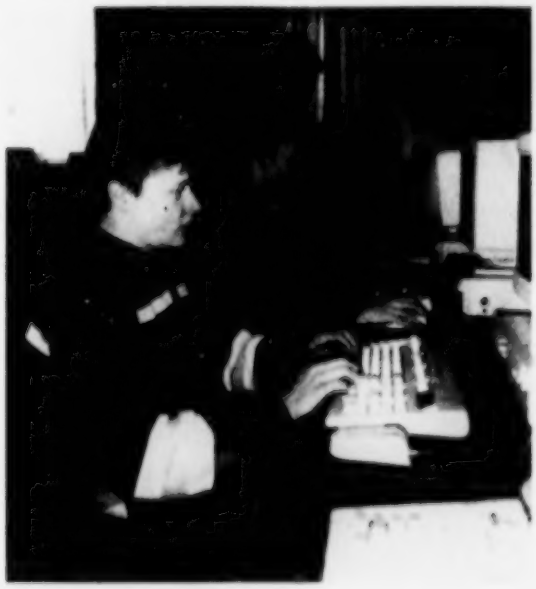
Description of 1997-98 Student Population	New Century School[1]		Verona Area School District[2]	
Grades	K-5		K-5	
Total Enrollment	73		1,921	
	number	*percentage*	*number*	*percentage*
Gender				
Males	41	56.2	998	51.9
Females	32	43.8	923	48.1
Race				
American Indians or Alaskan Natives	0	0.0	10	0.5
Asians/Pacific Islanders	2	2.7	41	2.1
Blacks	2	2.7	142	7.4
Hispanics	0	0.0	38	2.0
Whites	69	94.6	1,690	88.0
At-Risk Students	0	0.0	data not available	
Learning Disabled[3]	2	2.7	50	2.6
Emotionally Disturbed[3]	2	2.7	19	1.0
Physically Handicapped[3]	0	0.0	3	0.2
Received Free or Reduced-Price Lunch	6	8.2	440[4]	11.0[4]

[1]Charter school data are from a 5-1-98 survey conducted by DPI.
[2]District enrollment data are for the same grade levels served by the charter school and are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 4-1-98. Figures include charter school numbers as part of the district totals.
[3]District data on EEN students are from DPI's Center for Education Statistics, 12-1-97. Only primary disabilities are represented; any student listed in one category is not listed in another, even if the student has more than one disability.
[4]Free or reduced-price lunch data are for the entire district. Source is DPI's Food and Nutrition Services, 10-1-97.

Wisconsin Charter Schools
Opened in 1998

3

Fond du Lac Area Charter School
Glidden Charter School
Coulee Montessori, La Crosse
Leadership Academy Charter School, Lac du Flambeau
Lancaster Academy
Mauston Alternative Resource School (M.A.R.S.)
Lucas Charter School, Menomonie
The Khamit Institute, Milwaukee
Marva Collins Preparatory School, Milwaukee
The Montessori Academy, Milwaukee
Monona Grove Alternative High School, Monona
Monroe Alternative Charter School
Clark County Alternative School, Neillsville
Project Opportunity, St. Francis
Trevor Accelerated Program (T.A.P.)
Waupaca County Charter School
Nature and Technology Charter School, Woodruff



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New Charter School Development

With all of the federal charter school planning grants awarded through the Department of Public Instruction in 1997 and 1998, it is not at all surprising that 1998 was an explosive year for charter school development in Wisconsin. These planning grants allow interested groups to explore the feasibility of establishing a charter school without requiring a commitment to do so. It is a testament to the success of the planning grant program that so many of the awards are resulting in operating charter schools. Indeed, by October of 1998, the total number of operating charter schools in the state of Wisconsin will have doubled. See Appendix D for a complete list and description of planning grant recipients.

Changes in Wisconsin's charter school law have also contributed to the successful implementation of several charter school proposals. Three new charter schools are sponsored by the City of Milwaukee. Others involve job placement agencies and human services agencies in the operation of the charter school. The word has spread regarding the success of charter schools, and other school districts are recognizing charter schools as one way to meet local needs and innovate.

All of the schools in this chapter began operation in 1998. Some are having their charters approved and opening for their first day of school, even as this publication is written. These schools are so new, that enrollment data was not yet available, as in the descriptions of the more established charter schools in the previous chapter. As these schools continue to develop their routines, the Department of Public Instruction will make this information available. An abbreviated description of the new schools and their programs follows, making this the most up-to-date information available on charter schools in Wisconsin.

Fond du Lac Area Charter School

525 East Pioneer Road
Fond du Lac, WI 54935
Carolyn Keeler
(920) 929-2772

Fond du Lac School District
Dewitt Jones, Superintendent
72 South Portland Street
Fond du Lac, WI 54935
(920) 929-2760

The Fond du Lac Area Charter School is a five-district effort to establish a student-operated business called Charter Products, Inc. The business exists as the charter school. Paid teaching staff and volunteer business representatives guide enrolled students in every phase of business operations, including pricing, management, marketing, accounting, and human resources. This charter school concept builds upon existing school-to-work initiatives by supplementing traditional skill-specific apprenticeship opportunities with holistic apprenticeship opportunities.

The school is not intended to feed employees to a specific industry. Rather, it will produce students who demonstrate an understanding of the basics of business enterprise, the ability to learn new skills, and a proven work record. In addition to a high school diploma, graduates from the charter school have a showcase work portfolio, a certificate of skills to present to a future employer, and/or a certificate of earned credits from approved technical colleges or universities.

The charter school's vision is based on the premise that traditional approaches to instruction do not assist students in making the transition from knowing that something is true to knowing how to think, learn, and solve problems. In order to address the need for higher-order thinking skill development and authentic learning opportunities, administrators of the Fond du Lac Area School-to-Work Consortium envisioned the development of a charter school that provides students with an engaged learning environment where students learn through exploration and experiential opportunities.

Creating this type of learning environment is the main goal of the charter school. Students as engaged learners are strategic in their thinking. They are given the skills necessary to constantly develop and refine their learning and creative problem-solving capabilities. These engaged learners become energized by learning; learning is its own motivation and results in a life long passion for formal and informal modes of education.

Engaged learners are also collaborative. They begin to develop an appreciation for the talents of others and learn to work with them skillfully. They learn the skills necessary to articulate complex ideas to others and to respectfully respond to diverse and differing perspectives.

Finally, an engaged learning environment stresses authentic task completion wherein students clearly discern the relevancy between classroom curricula and the real world. In the end, teachers become more than simple information givers. Instead, teachers become facilitators, guides, and co-learners with their students.

Because of the combination of business and academics, the school incorporates many principles that are basic to prosperous businesses, and sound teaching and training methods such as, goal setting, strategic planning, quality assurance, benchmarking, customer satisfaction, flexibility, productivity, integration of technology, teamwork, problem solving, and complex reasoning skills. In this charter school business, students assume responsibilities in real positions such as marketing, office administration, or production, and their learning environment is truly reality-based. Students accomplish their academic goals in a workplace setting.

Likewise, student assessment is reality-based. Students must demonstrate their ability to solve real-world problems; their ability to show, explain, or teach an idea or skill to another person; and their ability to perform appropriately in unanticipated situations. Students are not simply assessed on fact retention, but rather on their ability to integrate what they have learned into a real-world setting in a manner that requires higher-order thinking skills. For example, assessment of a student in marketing might be through observation of the student in a sales presentation to a prospective client. For an office worker, assessment might be based upon the student's skills in developing billing statements.

Through their work experience at Charter Products, Inc., students develop an understanding of business operations and economics; skills as an effective communicator; critical, creative, problem-solving, and decision-making skills; universal employability skills such as punctuality, realistic self-evaluations, courteous and congenial interaction; an ability to function effectively in a team effort including an understanding of leadership, responsibility, accountability, and work ethic; commitment to the organization; and an ability to work within health and safety guidelines.

Glidden Charter School

370 South Grant Street
P.O. Box 96
Glidden, WI 54527
Sandra Palacek
(715) 264-2141

Glidden School District
James Reed, District Administrator
370 South Grant Street,
P.O. Box 96 Glidden, WI 54527
(715) 264-2021

The Glidden Charter School provides regular hour and after school tutoring and guidance by certified staff for students in grades 3 through 12, although the largest population of students served are in grades 6 through 9. The school offers additional instruction, emotional support, and an alternative setting for students unable to succeed in the regular classroom. The charter school serves about 5 percent of the total student population in an environment that emphasizes firm direction and discipline, caring, and mentoring. Students build self-esteem by experiencing success, catching up with their peers, and rejoining the traditional classroom.

The school district recognizes the needs of its at-risk students and approved the charter school as a preventative measure. About 64 percent of the district's students come from low income families. The main source of income is in logging and related industries. Many also participate in seasonal employment in Christmas wreath manufacturing. Wages tend to be low, so many families must rely on two wage earners to meet their family's financial needs. This tendency for both parents to work often puts stress on families and means that the needs of the children are often compromised for the sake of the family as a whole. Research shows that these children are at-risk for failure in school. The Glidden Charter School was established to help students receive adequate educational and emotional support. The school's efforts can mean the difference between success and failure in school and in life.

Students of the Glidden Charter School do not necessarily qualify for EEN services. They are capable students who are failing because they have fallen behind, lost confidence, and quit trying. Because the charter school tailors its curriculum and learning activities to the individual student's needs, staff can reach these students before they drop out.

The goals of the school include providing additional instruction outside the regular classroom, providing an alternative setting for students unable to succeed in the regular classroom, and supporting students in need of adult interaction and guidance in the after school hours. Students become successful, independent learners, able to meet the requirements of the challenging state and local standards.

The Glidden Charter School stresses mastering of the traditional "three R's." Developing the skills essential for continued learning is key to self-motivated learning and problem solving. Research shows that the inability to read is almost always a part of the underachieving student's profile. Students who do not "catch on" to reading continue to lag behind if they are not given the best reading instruction in phonology, phonetics, orthography, and language skills. Therefore, the Glidden Charter School's main academic goal is to help students attain a reading level that enables them to learn independently in their grade level work. Language skills are also taught in the context of content classes like science or social studies, allowing the student to improve his or her reading skills while acquiring the knowledge required of the content area. In short, the school-within-a-school provides a curriculum tailored to meet the individual's needs, with the goal of getting the student back on track, so he or she can rejoin the regular classroom and experience success.

Coulee Montessori, La Crosse

901 Caledonia Street
La Crosse, WI 54603
Harvey Witzenburg
(608) 789-7685

School District of La Crosse
Thomas Downs, District Administrator
807 East Avenue South
La Crosse, WI 54601
(608) 789-7600

The Coulee Montessori School welcomed its first classes in August of 1998 as the first public Montessori school in Western Wisconsin. The school opened with 38 students in two multi-age classrooms: one Children's House classroom for five-year-olds and one Elementary One classroom for six-, seven-, and eight-year-olds.

The school is founded on the belief that three key elements are required for success: the teacher, the children, and the environment.

Teacher

The teacher is a guide whose primary task is to create a wonderful setting for learning. When children can't resist learning, they become internally motivated and self-sufficient in learning with minimal direction. Teachers are observers, always trying to find the right materials and the right time to spark a child's imagination.

Children

Individually or in small groups, children use well-conceptualized materials that allow them to learn independently, without much supervision. When they make errors in their practice, they are invited to have the lesson presented again, without judgment, until they "get it." Children are taught core information in such a way that once it is understood, they can proceed to use their learning as a springboard for their own creative thinking and learning.

Environment

The environment is well-prepared and child-centered. Materials are placed on shelves so that children can access them as they wish to pursue a particular interest. The youngest children (ages three to six) select their own materials on their own time schedule. The Elementary One students typically have work plans. One of the strengths of Montessori materials is that they are structured to be the center of the learning, rather than the teacher, so as children work with any given material and complete an activity successfully, they give evidence of that learning as they move to the next step in the sequence. The goal of this interaction is that children learn concentration, cooperation, order, and independence, the basic behaviors that are used as a foundation for their content acquisition.

Five themes provide a framework for the elementary program: the universe, time, human history, literacy, and mathematics. When the children find an area of interest that they wish to pursue, the ever-popular dinosaur fascination, for instance, they can see how those creatures fit into the big picture of the history of the world as they integrate knowledge and skills from reading, language arts, math, social studies, science, and fine arts.

Montessori education also has a community component called "going out." Individuals or small groups go into the community to investigate particular questions that emerge from their individual or small group study. These "goings out" are most frequently parent-led.

School leadership is provided by a site council comprised of parents, community representatives, teachers, the principal, and a Montessori-trained program support person. Parents are an integral part of the school's daily activities. Parent education in Montessori philosophy and practice is structured in a way to engage parents even more in Maria Montessori's perspective of child development.

Leadership Academy Charter School, Lac du Flambeau

2899 Highway 47
Lac du Flambeau, WI 54538
Karen Crisman
(715) 588-3838

Lac du Flambeau School District #1
Richard Vought, District Administrator
2899 Highway 47
Lac du Flambeau, WI 54538
(715) 588-3838

Leadership Academy Charter School serves 10 of the most at-risk students in grades 6, 7, and 8. The school's mission is to help these students reach their potential as learners and free themselves of low self-esteem, poor grades, delinquency, truancy, unacceptable behavior, and related risk factors. Students are taught the critical-thinking and decision-making skills needed to achieve, and are prepared to be good citizens of strong character, a credit to themselves, their families, their school, and their community.

The curriculum is aligned with Wisconsin's academic standards to assure that students will be successful on the Wisconsin Knowledge and Concepts Examinations. Each student has a personal education plan developed by the student, parent, and staff. This plan considers individual strengths and weaknesses and becomes a working document.

Computer Curriculum Corporation's *Success-Maker* is the foundation for individually-paced learning, based on interaction between students and their computers, their teachers, and each other. This interactive environment develops cooperative learning strategies. Students learn to depend on each other and that their individual participation and learning are essential to achieving group goals. Multimedia technology provides a highly motivating environment for students to work together. By discussing assignments, conducting experiments, participating in problem-solving activities, resolving conflicts and reaching agreement, students learn important interpersonal skills while mastering academic material.

SuccessMaker provides foundation courses in reading, language arts, mathematics, and the sciences. These courses are highly individualized, becoming one student's path to accelerated learning and another student's safety. Higher-order thinking skills and problem-solving skills are emphasized through rich, student-directed adventures in literature, mathematics, science, and life skills.

The program is run by one full-time teacher, and a part-time social worker, psychologist, and director of pupil services. Each play an important role in assuring students' success. The teacher provides high-interest opportunities for the students to learn by doing. Learning takes place in the classroom and in the community. Service learning provides thoughtfully organized experiences that integrate students' academic learning with service that meets actual community needs. Native American culture is celebrated and incorporated in many facets of the program. Vocational skills, technology education, life skills, career education, art, and music are all included as part of the self-contained classroom, facilitated by the teacher.

The school psychologist plays an important role in personal development. Both individual and group activities are provided daily. Many of the students face difficult situations that they are often unequipped to handle, including low self-esteem, dysfunctional families, peer pressure, drugs, and violence. They sometimes feel their lives are out of control and without direction. The psychologist helps each child set and achieve individual personal and academic goals, provides counseling, teaches coping skills, and targets intervention and prevention strategies.

The social worker acts as a link between student, family, and school. Home visits are made by both the social worker and teacher to assure the home/school connection.

The director of pupil services is responsible for daily supervisory functions, including overseeing education programs, handling student discipline, assessment and evaluation, and maintaining contact with the board of education and district administrator.

Lancaster Academy

925 West Maple Street
Lancaster, WI 53813-1599
Deirdrie Weber
(608) 723-5163

Lancaster Community School District
Dan A. Dahlgren, District Administrator
925 West Maple Street
Lancaster, WI 53813-1599
(608) 723-2175

Lancaster Academy is an alternative school for students in grades 7 through 12. Lancaster is a rural southwest Wisconsin community that has, in recent years, experienced gang activity. When five students were expelled from their regular education classes for bringing weapons to school, the need for an alternative was clear. Lancaster Academy is an alternative to expulsion, providing basic academics and promoting the development of responsible habits.

The Lancaster Academy operates on the premise that the purpose of school is to educate and help each child reach his or her maximum level of performance. The charter school is committed to educating students to master essential academic skills and to develop personal skills and attitudes necessary for successful life pursuits through three program components: academics, social development, and work experience/service learning.

Academics

The curriculum is personalized and individualized so that each student can develop his/her talents and sense of responsibility at a realistic rate. Preparation for adulthood and its responsibility in a democratic society is given high priority, along with values, and acquisition of practical skills. Competency-based objectives in the core academic areas are taught as they apply to the student's individual program.

Social Development

Social bonding and collaborative work is another segment of the curriculum, with activities to create positive and respectful relations between adults and students. Topics include trust, responsibility, peer relations, relationships with adults, goal setting, self-esteem, and conflict resolution. Emphasis is placed on being part of a successful team.

Work Experience

Successful student transition to the world of work is the goal of the charter school's staff. The community is used as a learning environment as much as possible. An assortment of work-related experience is covered, particularly the individual's responsibility at a work site.

Service Learning

For the students who are too young for work study, the charter school provides a service learning program. Students learn and develop through thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and are coordinated with the school and the community. These opportunities allow students to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations.

Students are in school for up to 180 days per year, but because they only attend Mondays through Thursdays, students are actually in school for more months of the year. By operating during more months of the year, the continuous learning pattern of the students is uninterrupted and retention of learning is better. Students commit to a minimum of 3.5 hours per day, which includes classroom and work components. Schedules and emphasis on academic curricular components vary according to individual student needs. These needs are identified when the students enter the charter school.

The school is run by an oversight committee that includes two area principals, one counselor, five community and business people and parents, a high school teacher, a middle school teacher, and two school board members.

Mauston Alternative Resource School (M.A.R.S.)

510 Grayside Avenue
Mauston, WI 53948
Dawn Nelson
(608) 847-6603

School District of Mauston
Ralph Neale, District Administrator
508 Grayside Avenue
Mauston, WI 53948
(608) 847-5451

The Mauston Alternative Resource School (M.A.R.S.) opened in August of 1998 to serve at-risk students in grades 7 through 12 who are truant, credit deficient, teen parents, or gifted students whose educational needs are not being satisfied in the traditional school setting.

The charter school is driven by the fact that all students learn differently, each with his or her own style and rate of learning. Before enrolling, students and parents meet with a placement team to establish an individualized educational plan based on the needs and interests of the student. Once enrolled, a high priority is placed on self-direction and the student's acceptance of responsibility for his or her own learning. Using student input, "high interest units" are developed to guide the students' course of study. Each student is expected to assume a student-centered role in the learning process.

The foundation of the curriculum is based on applied knowledge such as communication, thinking, and decision making. As students apply their knowledge both within and across the various curricular areas, they develop the concepts and complex thinking of an educated person. Mauston's five established district goals are for every student to:

- be skilled in communication;
- produce quality work;
- demonstrate connections with the community;
- be self-directed learners; and
- demonstrate citizenship.

This charter school curriculum focuses on hands-on learning experiences, high expectations, and real-life planning components. The curriculum is a synthesis of present state standards, school-to-work proficiencies, and locally established school-to-work criteria. School staff also work to establish a strong link between curriculum, student activity, and community service in an effort to connect students from rural areas with their community-wide support system.

M.A.R.S. is committed to the use of technology as a tool to help students succeed. Research shows that students engaged in learning through technology score higher on standardized tests, think at higher levels, and identify more ways to apply the information learned. The utilization of art and music have also been found to motivate students to succeed academically and socially.

Student assessment is through a variety of tools and methods that are aimed at consistent tracking of student success. The individual learning plan is monitored through timely assessment including some standardized tests, teacher observation, and student self-evaluation. Results are compiled in portfolios and narrative style report cards and communicated in parent conferences.

The basic tenets for governance of the Mauston Alternative Resource School are participatory and shared decision making among charter school parents, teachers, administrators, students, and school board members. The Mauston board of education approves all policy decisions.

Lucas Charter School, Menomonie

N5630 - 200th Street
Menomonie, WI 54751
Jim Kilkenny
(715) 232-1790

School District of Menomonie
David H. Smette, District Administrator
718 North Broadway
Menomonie, WI 54751
(715) 232-1642

The Lucas Charter School, formerly the Dunn County Alternative School, opened in 1996 and achieved charter status in 1998. It serves at-risk high school students that have exhibited severe behavior problems, and whose needs have not been met by the traditional high school programs. These students are often truant, credit deficient, confrontational, and disruptive. The school staff believes that given an encouraging, nurturing environment, students will be able to learn how to make choices that allow them to achieve in school and to become productive, contributing members of society.

Every component of the curriculum has connection to the students' lives and to the world around them. Students are given choices and accept the responsibilities and consequences that come with those choices. The curriculum has three main components: academic, vocational, and social support.

Academic

Each student participates in an individually designed program, demonstrating competencies in academics, job seeking and keeping skills, and social/family living skills. Individual program plans are reviewed throughout the year and revised whenever necessary. Students become full participants in developing their programs and in directing their learning. Assessment is through portfolio, product, and project presentation. All students graduate from high school and move on to college, technical school, apprenticeships, the military, or other employment. The school has developed very specific curriculum goals, that include developing and demonstrating:

- a substantial knowledge base;
- interpersonal skills;
- thinking and communication skills;
- aesthetic awareness and appreciation;
- characteristics of a responsible and involved citizen;
- respect for human diversity;
- physical and emotional wellness; and
- preparedness for productive work.

Vocational

Success on the job can be the incentive that motivates students. It is an area for teaching life skills, and the framework for applying academics. Students attend school and job daily. All students are expected to perform volunteer community service and become successfully employed. Employers submit evaluations of students' work, and work-site supervisors provide on-going feedback.

Social Support

The school is driven by the integrated services model, taking into account a student's and family's strengths and needs, as well as the effects of family and community resources on their lives. It is a process of collaboration, cooperation, and shared investment of resources in the support and total development of the child and the family.

The agency participants in the integrated services model for the Lucas Charter School are the School District of Menomonie, Boyceville Community Schools, Elk Mound Area Schools, Dunn County Human Services, West Central Wisconsin Private Industry Council, and Indianhead Enterprises of Menomonie, Inc. The school districts and Dunn County Human Services have made direct financial contributions to the program. Each participating member has committed to making contributions as well.

One full-time teacher and one full-time assistant run the program with assistance from the Menomonie Public Schools social worker and Dunn County Human Services.

The Khamit Institute, Milwaukee

4714 West Fond Du Lac
Milwaukee, WI 53216
Yakini Shabaka
(414) 445-0602

City of Milwaukee
John Kalwitz, Common Council President
200 East Wells Street, Room 205
Milwaukee, WI 53202
(414) 286-2221

The Khamit Institute serves 48 central Milwaukee students in grades K4 through 8 utilizing multiage, multigrade classrooms. It provides excellence in education by creating a healthy, harmonious environment and a high quality of life for students and families.

In 1995, a group of parents and grandparents in central Milwaukee began to brainstorm about the ideal school for their children. They wanted a school that would reflect their values, respect their role and input as parents, love and nurture as well as teach their children, and offer small student-teacher ratios. Families also wanted to develop the full potential of their students, giving them the framework that would allow them to succeed in any endeavor. They wanted a culturally competent curriculum, and they wanted to motivate their children to become more than just job seekers.

Since this ideal school did not exist, the parents and grandparents created the Khamit Institute in 1996 to meet their needs. The school became a charter school in 1998. Through extensive research, the school founders decided to use: Direct Instruction as the teaching methodology; accelerated learning as a learning strategy; Khamitic philosophy to define values and principles; and entrepreneurial opportunities for students.

Direct Instruction

Research shows that Direct Instruction works for academically talented students and struggling learners. The academically talented students are able to move at a pace that allows for challenge and inspires quality, and struggling learners are given time to master a subject or concept before they move on. In the Direct Instruction model, no skill is taught in isolation. Rather, all skills are broken down into component subskills that students learn to full familiarity. The subskills are then brought together and connected with the larger strategy. Mastery of the larger strategy leads to fully independent problem-solving capability. This charter school uses the Direct Instruction curriculum and methodology for reading, language, math, and spelling.

Accelerated Learning

The accelerated learning approach is used to teach science, global studies, and Khamit Immersion. Parents seem particularly satisfied with the acceleration of their student's learning. Khamit students demonstrate a broad range of academic ability, yet the average advancement for the first year was 1.3 years. All students except one made gains of at least one year, and the lowest gain was .8 years.

Khamitic Philosophy

The Khamitic philosophy asserts that by utilizing certain tools, everyone can successfully interact with anything or anyone without becoming overwhelmed. Those tools include observance of basic health laws, the ability to devote inner strength to a project, applying technical information, creativity, self-control, a sense of justice and balance, and personal power through thorough knowledge of self. Students grow in the awareness that all streams of knowledge are but modes of their own intelligence. Creative genius blossoms as students develop increasing confidence and self-sufficiency. The school's motto is "know thyself."

Entrepreneurial Opportunities

At Khamit, this program component enhances the district-wide "school-to-work" initiative by focusing on motivation, inspiration, cultural reinforcements, and self-esteem, along with involvement in business development. Students are already running small businesses ranging from small appliance repair to traditional hair braiding.

The Khamit Institute is a family school in every sense of the word. Parents founded the school. Indeed the old African proverb, "it takes a whole village to raise a child," applies to the Khamit Institute. The school's "Family Day" features celebrations of each family's traditions and customs. Parents can also choose to be room parents, join a committee, or serve on the parent advisory board. Parent involvement is an expected and customary sight at Khamit. Meaningful parent involvement is indispensable to the holistic approach toward education.

Marva Collins Preparatory School, Milwaukee

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Robert Rauh
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City of Milwaukee
John Kalwitz, Common Council President
200 East Wells Street, Room 205
Milwaukee, WI 53202
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The Marva Collins Preparatory School of Wisconsin aims to provide the absolutely best education to inner-city children in Milwaukee, modeling itself on the Chicago school started by Marva Collins. The charter school currently serves approximately 180 students enrolled in four-year-old kindergarten through fourth grade, and plans to add one grade level each year until becoming a K-8 school of approximately 380 students.

The school is committed to providing each child a nurturing environment of high academic and social expectations, grounded in basic skills and values that allow each child to determine his or her success in life. The staff's philosophy is that failure does not belong to the child but to the teacher. Hard work, consistency, and repetition bring success to each student.

As documented on a *60 Minutes* segment that aired in the fall of 1996, the first graduates of Mrs. Collins' Westside Prep in Chicago, many of whom were labeled as "learning disabled" or "learning retarded," are now successfully employed with college degrees or attending law or graduate schools. One even spoke of how he used his sixth grade *Hamlet* notes to write a paper for his college English class!

Mrs. Collins professes to be an old-fashioned teacher who doesn't go for gimmicks in the classroom. Her educational philosophy is simply hard work, patience, and concern for each child. She has twice been asked, by presidents Reagan and Bush, to serve as the nation's Secretary of Education, but she declined to continue her work with the children of Chicago.

It is not unusual to find students memorizing poems and proverbs on a weekly basis, discussing fables from William Bennett's *Book of Virtues*, and addressing their teachers in complete and formal sentences such as, "The author of that poem is Nikki Grimes, Mr. Rauh."

The curriculum is steeped in basic, no nonsense educational basics coupled with a heavy dose of critical thinking skills and positive affirmation. The core of the language arts program is Mrs. Collins' phonics program. Students spend a solid 40 minutes per day learning phonetic rules that help them become master readers and wordsmiths. Students employing phonics skills can decode and read any word in the English language. The spelling, writing, and reading lessons all emanate from the concepts being taught in phonics. As the students' decoding skills increase, they are immersed in literature, both of free choice and assigned classics, to hone their reading skills and develop comprehension skills.

Science and social studies are tied into the reading program. For example, third graders studied spiders while reading *Charlotte's Web* and western migration while reading *Farmer Boy*.

The charter school uses the Saxon math curriculum and follows it almost verbatim, with the exception of accelerating its students through the program. Students are expected to complete basic algebra by the end of seventh grade.

A lot of teaching is done through chants or jingles that keep the students actively involved in the learning process and promote learning through repetition.

After one year of attendance at Marva Collins Prep, students are expected to be performing at or above grade level standards, as measured by the yearly administration of standardized tests.

The staff at Marva Collins Prep go through an extensive eight-week training session in the Marva Collins philosophy and pedagogy. Each teacher also engages in an educational coaching program that reinforces the Marva Collins methodology through tapes, readings, reflections, and curricular review. Progress on these issues is monitored and encouraged during bimonthly phone calls with a representative of Marva Collins Seminars, Inc., in Chicago.

Community response to the school has been overwhelming. The school expects twice as many applications as it has openings, even with the school doubling in size in the 1998-99 school year.

The Montessori Academy, Milwaukee

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Virginia Flynn
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City of Milwaukee
John Kalwitz, Common Council President
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The Montessori Academy, located in downtown Milwaukee, serves students from two and a half to six years of age in grades K3 through K5. Staff believe that children's early experience largely determines the kinds of adults they become. Their goal is to help children grow into self-confident, competent, cooperative adults, who enjoy a continued love of learning. The school also seeks to provide a family-oriented environment that enriches and nurtures the growth of the family as well as the child.

Montessori education is both a philosophy of child growth and rationale for guiding such growth. It is based on a child's developmental needs for freedom within limits, and a carefully prepared environment that guarantees exposure to materials and experiences that develop intelligence, physical abilities, and psychological abilities. Started in Italy by Dr. Maria Montessori, Montessori education was introduced into the United States in 1912, with one of the early schools established by Alexander Graham Bell in his own home.

Each child's inborn desire to learn is nurtured through the academic program that follows the natural path of a child's development. Individual learning is emphasized by offering a series of increasingly challenging exercises aimed at allowing pupils to develop their skills in mathematics, language, geography, science, art, and music. Teachers serve as guides, with pupils working at their own pace. Montessori education develops confident children able to work together and respect one another. Added to the regular curriculum are classes in art, music, and language. Computers are also learned through hands-on experience.

Children are free to move about the classroom at will, to talk to others, to work with any equipment whose purpose they understand, and to ask the teacher to introduce new materials to them. They are not free to disturb other children at work or to abuse the equipment that is so important to their development.

Teachers work with children individually and in groups, introducing materials and giving guidance where needed. One of the primary tasks of the teacher is careful observation of the children in order to determine their needs and to prepare the environment to aid their growth. The method of teaching is indirect in that teachers neither impose upon the children as in direct teaching, nor abandon them as in nondirective, permissive approaches. The role of the teacher is to help the children teach themselves through the use of the Montessori materials and attention to the learning environment. All teachers are trained and certified by either the Association Montessori International (AMI) or American Montessori Society (AMS).

The Montessori Academy strongly urges parent involvement with their child's education, and each parent signs a contract pledging a minimum number of volunteer hours to the school upon enrolling their student.

The school was chartered by the city of Milwaukee, and therefore submits an annual academic report to the city. The school is run by a board of directors. A full-time principal handles day-to-day operations.

Monona Grove Alternative High School, Monona

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Monona Grove School District
Phil Sobocincki, Superintendent
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Monona Grove Alternative High School provides an alternative learning environment for nine high school students struggling in the traditional school setting.

District staff realized that most students failing academically or involved with disciplinary issues were also experiencing difficulty in their personal lives. As the demands of society increase, students are also expected to be competent in a wider variety of skills at a higher level of sophistication. It was clear that the current school setting was not meeting the educational needs of the nontraditional student, thus the development of the alternative school.

This charter school is designed as a one-year competency-based program that enhances the chances for students to graduate from Monona Grove High School. One classroom, located within the current high school building, is staffed with one head teacher. Additional teachers with regular assignments in the high school interact with students to teach content-specific areas and to develop one-on-one mentoring relationships. Charter school students have access to the high school's guidance office, gymnasium, career center, computer labs, and other classrooms as needed.

Students apply to be accepted at Monona Grove Alternative High School in the spring of their junior year in high school. A pupil services team evaluates whether or not the candidate is a good match for the school. Students understand that there are high expectations for academic success and behavioral accountability.

The charter school program focuses on five major areas: academic skills, personal/social skills, employability skills, a service learning component, and basic living skills. These areas reinforce the district's goal to ensure that all students become life long learners able to face future challenges.

Academic Skills

Each student establishes an individualized course of study that has relevance and meaning for the student. The integrated curriculum covers the areas of the language arts and humanities, math, science and health, social studies, history, computer skills, study skills, and basic reading skills. Evaluation of student progress is performance-based through portfolios, student presentations, and/or written assignments. Progress is measured by continued improvement and the ability to find, produce, organize, and use information in problem-solving situations.

Personal/Social Skills

Students must develop human relationships to be successful at home and in the workplace. Topics such as trust, responsibility, respect, goal setting, peer relationships, family relationships, and conflict resolution are openly discussed and demonstrated. Assessment of a student's personal growth is based on observable behavioral changes. Student journals also reflect individual growth.

Employability Skills

Students are introduced to the world of work and given a wide range of experiences and information. Areas covered include job seeking, job keeping, entry level skills, job exploration, and an array of work-based learning experiences. By the beginning of the second semester, students are expected to have a job and work at least 12 hours per week. The student's mentor visits the job site periodically and evaluates the student with input from the supervisor. Students are also expected to maintain a career portfolio and participate in a career assessment survey.

Service Learning Component

Volunteer projects, done individually or in small groups, are student-driven. This program component allows the student to feel the intrinsic reward of giving to a worthy community cause while strengthening his/her self esteem and exploring possible career paths. Students become more resilient as they experience feelings of self worth; resiliency translates into student success.

Basic Life Skills

Students learn skills like basic nutrition, cooking, budgeting, and child care, skills necessary to being a productive, responsible adult. One of the unique features of Monona Grove High School is that there is a pre-kindergarten program within the school. Currently, child development students work in the class to certify in child care, allowing them to work in a daycare setting. This is an additional opportunity for students of the charter school to learn about young children, in the context of career exploration or as a future parent.

Students attend Monona Grove Alternative High School for five hours daily, and are then released to go to a work site or service learning project.

Teachers, students, administrators, and community representatives developed the operating structure, taking into consideration the students' needs and accountability. By allowing student input and involvement in the rules, expectations, and governance, it is hoped that the student will acknowledge the necessity for high expectations and consequences for failure.

Monroe Alternative Charter School

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Monroe, WI 53566
Dan Bauer
(608) 328-9128

School District of Monroe
Ed Van Ravenstein, District Administrator
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Monroe, WI 53566
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The Monroe Alternative Charter School serves at-risk students in grades 9 through 12. The goal of this charter school is to educate and develop all students to their highest potential in partnership with family, community, and business, and to prepare them for lifelong learning, challenge, responsibility, and opportunity. The school provides nontraditional approaches to meeting high school graduation requirements.

One teacher, two aides, and a full-time counselor work with approximately 15 students. The smallness allows the development of close relationships among students and staff and fosters a sense of belonging. There are few rules necessary. Teachers emphasize student responsibility, not student obedience. During the school's first year, there were no fights and no suspensions.

Monroe Alternative Charter School assists students in becoming contributing members of the community through three major program components: academics, personal and social skill development, and community service and employability skills.

Academics

Students prepare for the future by choosing one of three tracks: a traditional high school diploma, a general equivalency diploma, or a charter school competency-based diploma. Course work includes the core areas of English, science, math, and social studies. All students are required to take a computer literacy course and social skill course. All work is individualized as much as possible, and the curriculum modified to meet student needs.

Personal and Social Skill Development

Many, if not all, of the students enrolled in the charter school exhibit a mistrust of authority figures, anger management problems, an inability to resolve conflict by other than aggressive means, and socially inappropriate behavior. By teaching positive, pro-social attitudes and behaviors through a required social skills class, students strengthen their self-image and hopefulness, thus establishing better interpersonal relationships and personal control over their lives.

Community Service and Employability Skill Development

The Monroe Alternative Charter School requires attendance for a minimum of 15 hours per week, an average of three hours per day. The student is then excused, allowing time for outside employment or community service.

Staff believe that young people cannot develop a sense of their own value unless they have opportunities to be of value to others. Each student is expected to choose a community service job for a period of 10 weeks, and at the end of this time, student performance is evaluated. The opportunity to stay with that job is then extended to the student if performance is acceptable and the student desires to commit to another ten-week term.

Short-term community service jobs allow each student to be successful and still have an opportunity to explore their areas of interest while earning credits toward graduation. Staff feel that students need positive role models and feedback in their lives; this is an excellent way for them to give to the community and for the community to show that people really do care and can make a difference.

Governance of the charter school is based on participation and shared decision making among parents, teachers, administrators, and to a lesser extent and when appropriate, by some students.

Clark County Alternative School, Neillsville

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Nancy Forseth
(715) 720-2045

Neillsville School District
John Gaier, District Administrator
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The Clark County Alternative School was established as a partnership between the Neillsville and Granton school districts, Chippewa Valley Technical College, the Clark County Job Center/Private Industry Council, and the Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) for that area of Wisconsin. The school was established in 1994 and chartered in 1998 to meet the needs of approximately 30 at-risk high school students, ages 16 to 21. At the time of the school's formation, Clark County had the highest population of people without a high school diploma, according to an article in the *Milwaukee Journal*. The charter school is located in the same facility as the Clark County Job Center and Chippewa Valley Technical College, making for a functional and active partnership.

The school has been successful in recruiting dropouts, home schooled youth, and at-risk students who are failing in the regular school system. Habitual truants, teen parents, adjudicated youth, and students with a history of underachievement and failure get a fresh start and an opportunity to find success. Charter status provides more flexibility to accommodate student employment and family, medical, and judicial commitments.

The primary goal of the charter school is to provide an integrated academic, vocational, and behavioral program to keep at-risk youth in school to achieve credit towards a high school diploma or equivalent and to successfully transition the youth from school to work or a post secondary program.

The philosophy of the school is based on the premises that: all students need to be met where they are and challenged academically, emotionally, and socially; all students can learn within a caring community of learners; and a noncoercive climate and discipline model linked with research-based "best educational practices" provides the best environment for learning.

The school employs an integrated, thematic curriculum that incorporates the theory of multiple intelligences and experiential learning. All units are coordinated with the district's curricular goals. Activities are designed to promote team building, problem solving, creative thinking, conflict resolution, self-awareness, decision making, and leadership skills.

Students and teachers work together to create an individual learning plan that establishes specific objectives in the core areas of math, science, social studies, and English. Additional objectives based on individual interests round out the educational plan. Goal setting is an integral component of creating and monitoring the individual learning plan.

The Clark County Alternative School also provides an HSED component in collaboration with Chippewa Valley Technical College. CVTC provides instruction toward passing the GED. The Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS) curriculum may also be utilized to help students meet their individual objectives and credit requirements. Approximately half of the school's 30 students receive services in the HSED component, while the other half participate in the alternative school.

Work experience and community service opportunities complete the program at Clark County Alternative School. Students participate in seminars and employment training sessions offered by the Private Industry Council through the Clark County Job Center. Student job performance in the public or private sector is then monitored by a teacher or a representative of the Private Industry Council. Only students who have demonstrated job readiness are even considered for this portion of the program.

Community service activities involve students giving back to the community by working on projects to support the Highground Vietnam War Memorial, the Headstart program, and the local library, to name a few.

Measurable outcomes and appropriate measures of achievement are identified to document student growth. Standardized tests, portfolio review, and self-evaluation against stated goals are the primary means of student assessment.

The school is run by a board of governance that includes principals and representatives of all the participating and supporting agencies. In the near future, parents, students, and community members will be invited to participate in decision making and be represented on the board.

Project Opportunity, St. Francis

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Rick Monroe
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St. Francis School District
J.P. Campion, District Administrator
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The St. Francis School District established the Project Opportunity charter school to provide approximately 45 at-risk students in grades 9 through 12 with a year-round, learner-centered, and individually-paced educational program. The district recognizes that the traditional school structure was not meeting the needs of its at-risk students.

The school is located in a very high needs district. The city has the lowest per capita personal income in the metropolitan area outside of Milwaukee. It is comprised of 49 percent blue-collar workers with 20.2 percent of its residents having less than a high school education. Twenty percent of students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunches. The regular high school has a high rate of disciplinary problems; percentages of expulsions (4.1 percent) and suspensions (8.0 percent) are above state averages, and the percentage of teen pregnancies is high (5.4 percent of the female student population).

The charter school's vision and philosophy is based on the U.S. Department of Labor Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report. School staff believe that a high performance workplace requires people who have a solid foundation in basic literacy and computational skills, the thinking skills to put knowledge to work, and the personal qualities that make them dedicated and responsible. High performance workplaces also require competency in managing resources, working amicably and productively with others, acquiring and using information, mastering complex systems, and working with a variety of technologies.

Within the framework of the charter school, there is a focus on five workplace competencies and a three-part foundation of skills and personal qualities.

Workplace Competencies

- Resources—allocate time, money, materials, space, and staff
- Interpersonal skills—work on teams, teach others, serve customers, lead, negotiate, and work well with people from culturally diverse backgrounds
- Information—acquire and evaluate data, organize and maintain files, interpret and communicate, and use computers to process information
- Systems—understand social, organizational, and technological systems, monitor and correct performance, and design and improve systems
- Technology—select equipment and tools, apply technology to specific tasks, and maintain equipment

Foundation Skills

- Basic Skills—reading, writing, math, speaking, and listening
- Thinking Skills—the ability to learn, reason, think creatively, make decisions, and solve problems
- Personal Qualities—individual responsibility, self-esteem and self-management, sociability, and integrity

Project Opportunity is a school-within-a-school, offering a comprehensive curriculum with school, work experience, and service learning components. The charter school shares library, cafeteria, and gymnasium facilities with the regular high school. In addition, the district has purchased the *NovaNET* System for the charter school, which provides the means to develop a learner-centered, hands-on, and individually-paced educational program. The charter school also incorporates the Portable Assisted Study Sequence (PASS).

The charter school's broad goals and objectives are targeted at assisting students to learn more effectively and reach their full potential. Learner goals are related to what students in the charter school will be expected to know and be able to do. These areas go beyond the mastery of subject areas. Students learn to apply their knowledge and develop the concepts and complex thinking skills needed to successfully perform in the competitive workplace.

Project Opportunity's goal is to structure the year-round charter school with the flexibility to meet the specific needs of each at-risk student, given their individual needs, talents, interests, and circumstances. This flexibility is greatly enhanced with the PASS curriculum and the *NovaNET* System which allows students to dial

into the system anytime, day or night, from home or other site by using their own computer or the district's laptop computer.

The school is managed as a school-within-a-school, administrated by the St. Francis High School principal, supervised by the project coordinator, supported by the district Student Services Department, and taught by the St. Francis High School faculty and staff.

Trevor Accelerated Program (T.A.P.)

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Barbara Schaid
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Salem District #7
Rochelle McDevitt, District Administrator
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The Trevor Accelerated Program is an accelerated junior kindergarten for four-year-olds as well as an education and preparation program for parents of younger children. Located within Trevor Grade School, the charter school is also a prevention program designed to provide quality and developmentally appropriate schooling for all young children.

School staff believe that students should be ready to learn when they enter school. To aid in this preparation, staff have established a parent resource room, where they teach parents about nutrition, physical activity, and health care that will maintain their child's mental alertness. Staff work with the entire family in expanding their verbal and literacy experiences and informing parents about available community services. Parents learn what to expect of their child at various developmental stages, how to deal with stress, and how to regulate their own emotions.

The school teaches and aids parents in developing their child nutritionally and psychologically. Parents and families receive educational consultations and suggestions from trained professional personnel in their homes during scheduled quarterly visits. Parents receive their first visit in the hospital or shortly thereafter and set up an educational plan of development for the child. Parents are also invited to attend regularly scheduled parenting and literacy workshops at the school.

When the child approaches four years of age, he or she is admitted to the junior kindergarten. School is held Monday through Thursday. Teachers make home visits on Fridays. The education of young children focuses on early literacy, including reading and writing, motor skills, computer and mathematical skills, and social and emotional development. A variety of methods using Gardner's multiple intelligences are used to enable pupils to attain these goals. An integration of music, rhythm, kinetic, tactile, auditory, visual, math, linguistic, computer technology, and interpersonal skills are part of each child's individual curriculum plan. A trained reading recovery teacher implements theories on early literacy and reading in the classroom. The school counselor, art, gym, and music teachers support the charter program. Students are nurtured, played with, responded to, allowed to explore, and encouraged to express themselves. Coherence and quality control lays the groundwork for the kinds of people these children will become.

The school's objectives are for each child to have proper health care, including immunizations, appropriate family-child activities, and junior kindergarten experiences. Family-child activities include family child reading, other family-child language and literacy activities, storytelling and going to the library, and support for families of preschoolers.

Teachers at the charter school are currently training in the accelerated schools model. By implementing this model and treating each child as a gifted child, staff hope to create an entire school without failure.

Teachers, consultants, and a local community council designed and implemented the charter school. The community council includes community members, business leaders, parents, teachers, the county nurse, the two kindergarten teachers, a representative from the literacy council, and the superintendent.

T.A.P. is managed as a school-within-a-school, administrated by the superintendent, supervised by the project director, and supported by the Trevor school board, staff, parents, and community.

Waupaca County Charter School

Cooperative Educational Service Agency (CESA) 5
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Waupaca School District
David Poeschl, District Administrator
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The Waupaca County Charter School (WCCS) is a collaborative effort of six school districts and Waupaca County Social Services and serves 15 to 20 at-risk students in grades 7 through 12. These students are at risk of both school failure, as well as potential out-of-home placement. The school provides a highly structured educational and social skills program that is relevant to at-risk and disaffected secondary age youth and their families.

A county social worker works with students to promote behavioral change. Individual and group sessions encourage the communication process and enable students to confront issues ranging from alcohol and drugs, court involvement, and family and community concerns.

Because family involvement is an important factor in contributing to the student's success, direct involvement with the social worker extends to the family. Active family involvement in the program is expected. Open communication is the key to this involvement. Families participate in on-going therapy designed to intervene with both family and student issues. Parental group meetings are offered through the charter school three times per year.

WCCS is based on the philosophy that students can change. Staff believe that positive change in students is best accelerated through behavior modification, cognitive interventions, educational programming, and family involvement. The overall goal for each individual student is to improve their skills in order to successfully reintegrate into their home school district. Group work provides the basic framework for educational programming. An emphasis is placed on hands-on, experiential, and life skills educational opportunities and community service.

Cognitive intervention is the preferred method of behavioral change within the program. This basis for change is that students must first change the way they think in order to change the way they act. Self management and social skills instruction are included as part of the "change" instruction.

The behavioral component of the program is based on a high level of structure and personal accountability measured by a point and level system. Numerous positive and logical consequences are utilized. Areas of emphasis are conflict, language, attitude, work, and thinking skills.

Desired outcomes of the program include reintegration of this population into a traditional, vocational, or educational program; decreases in their community problems with courts, law enforcement, and social services; completion of an education program; and successful transition to post secondary programming or employment. A secondary outcome includes an improvement in the quality of life for both the students and their families, through academic and vocational growth, and increased responsibility for one's decisions and behavior.

One goal of the program is to provide an effective local treatment model with a less restrictive, more cost effective approach. Traditionally, this treatment is typified by out-of-home placements to resident, foster, or correctional settings. A secondary goal is to address the needs of younger siblings who are also very likely at risk.

Students are referred to WCCS by a lead teacher or social worker assigned to the program. Staff from WCCS visit the referred student, his or her school, school staff, and parents and detail the behaviors that need to be addressed for the student to remain in his or her current placement. As part of the contract process, the student and the parents are asked to visit the WCCS program. This contract becomes an addendum to the student's educational plan. If the student fails to meet the terms of the contract, the district contacts the lead teacher, and parents are given a notice of change of placement into WCCS.

Once a student is placed at WCCS, enrollment is for a minimum of one semester before integration into a work study program or regular school is considered. Should reintegration into a regular school be considered, the student is placed in a district other than his home district. Placement in the nonresident district would be tuition free for all districts who are members of the WCCS program. All participating districts serve as placement options for reintegration efforts.

The student then agrees to a contract for reintegration. If the student breaks the terms in regard to performance expectations, academically or behaviorally, the reintegration placement is discontinued.

All credits earned while at WCCS are honored by the resident school. In the event a student remains at WCCS for a significant portion of his high school career or should integration efforts into a traditional school not be an option, then graduation through WCCS is an option. Graduation is achieved by obtaining credits at WCCS that meet the requirements of the resident school, through a combination of regular school credits, WCCS credits, and credits from a technical school, or credits earned from on-the-job placement. The resident school would provide the diploma, and the student could determine if he or her wishes to go through the regular graduation exercises at school or if the diploma be granted at a special ceremony at WCCS. Should graduation not be possible due to severe credit deficiencies, a GED or HSED program would serve as the focus of academic study at WCCS.

The Waupaca County Charter School is run by an advisory board consisting of one voting member per participating school district, two voting members from Waupaca County Social Services, and one voting member from the county board.

Nature and Technology Charter School, Woodruff

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Arbor Vitae-Woodruff Joint School District
William J. Pollard, District Administrator
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The Nature and Technology Charter School serves 16 of the district's most at-risk students in grades 6 through 8. The program targets students who have not performed well in the traditional school setting and who display the common characteristics of students at risk, including high absence rates, peer relationship problems, low achievement as related to ability, and family issues.

The school's mission is to maximize the abilities of all students to learn, dream, grow, and contribute to a diverse and dynamic society through an education designed to meet the individual needs of each student. By developing their potential, students become active, participating citizens in their community. Staff believe that they can accomplish this mission by offering an alternative, outdoor setting where learning takes place. In this atmosphere, students satisfy their academic requirements in a unique way while developing positive relationships and an appreciation of their total environment and community.

Outdoor Setting and Curriculum

The school uses thematic units where multiple subjects are integrated with a holistic approach to learning. While many subjects are integrated into the thematic units, all the units have an environmental and technological component. The activities the students do to complete the objectives of individual units are guided by the student's needs, interests, and learning styles. Students are taught how to recognize characteristics of their own individual learning style. This information is then used to customize the student's learning plan.

Each student's individualized learning plan is coordinated with the regular school curriculum and maintains the high achievement standards set by the district and the state. Student assessment is through portfolios, thematic unit presentations, and standardized testing. Thematic units are broken into specific measurable competencies and evaluated on a timely basis. Traditional letter grading is not used. All competencies are completed before the student proceeds to the next unit.

The outdoor setting is also used as a means of curriculum enrichment. All of the elements of the total environment—natural, community, and human—are integrated. Effective learning (attitudes and appreciations) and psychomotor skills (manipulative and stress) are emphasized and supported by a variety of cognitive learnings and multi-sensory experiences.

First-hand learning opportunities involve ecological explorations of the environment that develop and improve the knowledge, understanding, attitude, behavior, and appreciation of values, skills, and stewardship responsibility of the learner. The environment provides learning opportunities that enable the teacher and learner to more fully realize and uniquely achieve many established educational goals.

Relationships

The outdoor setting aids in the development of relationships. Through directed problem-solving activities based on student interests, cooperative student-teacher and peer relationships develop. The smallness of the school is meant to promote a family atmosphere among students and teachers.

Parents are encouraged to be a part of the student's education as much as possible. Home visits, frequent student/parent/teacher goal setting conferences and group activities that include parents help the parents to become a part of the child's educational process.

Community

Outdoor education promotes an understanding, a conscience, and an awareness of the relationships between individuals and their total environment. Students come to see the outdoors as a resource for constructive use of their leisure time. They develop an ecological conscience and extension of ethics from people to land based upon a knowledge of human needs and a land ethic. Students are elevated physically, mentally, emotionally, socially, and spiritually, and become able to co-exist as one with the world around them.

The school is a multi-agency and community collaboration, with planning and implementation of the school done by two charter school team members and teachers, the school board, and representatives of the school district administration, the community, law enforcement, and social services.

Comparing Charter Schools 4

Curriculum / Instructional Program and Method of Assessment

Populations and Locations

Schedules

Administrative Information

One thing is certain: charter schools in Wisconsin are nearly impossible to compare on a one-to-one basis. While many of their goals in educating and preparing children are similar, each fulfills a very specific local need in education. Some simply want to offer a choice to parents and students in the area of curriculum, teaching methodology, and classroom structure. Others work feverishly to keep that small population of Wisconsin students from "falling through the cracks" through counseling and lots of personal attention and support. The local community, school boards, and parents have identified these needs and taken the steps they believe will best meet the needs of their students.

In reviewing the tables and charts below that attempt to "compare" Wisconsin's operating charter schools, the reader will see just how different they can be, despite their common goal of providing a solid education for their students. The charter schools provided DPI with these data for the 1997-98 school year in a survey dated May 1, 1998. Some of the charter schools that opened in 1998 may not be included in the charts that follow.

Table 18

Curriculum/Instructional Program and Method of Student Assessment

One of the major tenets of a charter school is flexibility in the areas of curriculum, teaching methodology, and classroom structure. Charter schools are free to experiment in these areas in an effort to best meet their students' needs. Below are some of the ways Wisconsin's charter schools describe their programs. These data are as of May 1, 1998.

Charter School	Thematic/Interdisciplinary	Back-to-Basics/Core Curriculum	Individualized Education Plans	Special Curriculum/ Instructional Methodology*	Character Education	Focus on a Particular Subject	Vocational/Technical Education	Expanded Use of Technology	Performance Assessment, Exhibitions, Portfolios	Community as a Classroom	Multi-Age Groupings/Ability Groupings	Community/Volunteer Service	Reality Therapy/Quality School Discipline Model	Home Study
Appleton		X	X		X	X	X	X					X	X
Beaver Dam	X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Deerfield	X		X		X			X	X	X	X		X	
Eau Claire, McKinley	X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Kenosha, Brompton School		X												
Kenosha, Paideia Academy	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				X	
La Crosse, Coulee Montessori				X										
La Crosse, SOTA	X		X			X		X	X	X	X			
La Crosse, SOTA II	X		X			X		X	X		X			
Ladysmith	X	X	X						X					
Lancaster Academy			X					X		X			X	
Madison, Affiliated Alternatives	X	X	X		X		X	X		X	X			
Madison, James C. Wright	X							X						
Middleton, M.A.S.H.	X		X				X		X				X	
Milwaukee, Highland				X							X			
Monroe Alternative			X				X	X						
North Crawford, Kickapoo River Institute	X		X	X				X	X	X	X		X	X
Stevens Point, T.E.A.M.S.	X	X	X			X			X				X	
Verona, Core Knowledge				X							X			
Verona, New Century	X				X				X	X	X			

*(Montesson, Paideia, Direct Instruction, bio-regional focus)

Populations and Locations

Wisconsin's charter schools serve students in every grade level, in rural, suburban, and urban locations. Some of these charter schools can be found within other public schools, sharing administrative services. Others are located in their own charter school facility. These data are as of May 1, 1998.

Charter School	Total Enrollment	Grade	Location	Share facilities with another school?
Appleton	95	9-12	urban	no
Beaver Dam	134	6-12	rural	no
Deerfield	10	9-12	rural	yes
Eau Claire, McKinley	67	6-12	suburban	no
Kenosha, Brompton School	91	K-6	urban	no
Kenosha, Paideia Academy	39	7-8	urban	no
La Crosse, Coulee Montessori	38	K-2	urban	yes
La Crosse, SOTA	90	K-5	urban	yes
La Crosse, SOTA II	37	6-8	urban	yes
Ladysmith	16	10-12	rural	yes
Lancaster Academy	6	7-12	rural	yes
Madison, Affiliated Alternatives	388	7-12	urban	no
Madison, James C. Wright	178	6-8	urban	no
Middleton, M.A.S.H.	100	10-12	suburban	no
Milwaukee, Highland	65	K3-3	urban	no
Monroe Alternative	15	9-12	rural	no
North Crawford, Kickapoo River Institute	19	9-10	rural	no
Stevens Point, T.E.A.M.S.	98	10-11	suburban	yes
Verona, Core Knowledge	236	K-8	suburban	yes
Verona, New Century	73	K-5	suburban	yes

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Table 20

Schedules

Some charter schools offer flexible schedules to students who need to work. Others provide tutoring and supervision of students in the morning and evening while parents are working. Summer programs may be geared toward helping students who need to catch up on their academics or toward providing a safe, educational environment to younger students with working parents. These data are as of May 1, 1998.

Charter School	Flexible School Day	Evening Program	Summer Program	Before School	After School	Year Round Program
Appleton	X					
Beaver Dam	X	X				
Deerfield	X			X	X	
Eau Claire, McKinley	X	X				
Kenosha, Brompton School	NONE					
Kenosha, Paideia Academy	X					
La Crosse, Coulee Montessori	X		X	X	X	
La Crosse, SOTA	NONE					
La Crosse, SOTA II	NONE					
Ladysmith	X	X	X			
Lancaster Academy	X	X	X			
Madison, Affiliated Alternatives	X			X	X	
Madison, James C. Wright	NONE					
Middleton, M.A.S.H.	X	X				
Milwaukee, Highland					X	
Monroe Alternative	X					
North Crawford, Kickapoo River Institute	X	X	X			
Stevens Point, T.E.A.M.S.	X					
Verona, Core Knowledge			X			
Verona, New Century			X	X	X	

Table 21

Administrative Information

For the charter schools that serve the at-risk student population, attendance rates and graduation/grade promotion rates represent students who may have otherwise "fallen through the cracks." Most charter school have fairly extensive waiting lists, indicating the popularity of and need for continued charter school programming. These data are as of May 1, 1998.

Charter School	Attendance Rate (Percent)	Date of Current Charter	Length of Charter	Number of Years Operating as Charter	Number of Students on Waiting List	Grade Promotion/ Graduation
Appleton	87	12/96	3	2.5	13	84
Beaver Dam	90	1/95	5	3	30	95
Deerfield	80	10/96	3	2.5	no list	90
Eau Claire, McKinley	96	1/96	5	2	no list	100
Kenosha, Brompton School	97	5/97	3	1	100	100
Kenosha, Paideia Academy	not given	5/97	3	1	6	100
La Crosse, Coulee Montessori	96	3/98	5	.5	no list	not given
La Crosse, SOTA	95	6/96	4	3	20	100
La Crosse, SOTA II	93	7/97	4	1	no list	100
Ladysmith	78	4/98	1	1	no list	100
Lancaster Academy	80	11/97	3	.5	no list	not given
Madison, Affiliated Alternatives	93	1/98	5	2	120	70
Madison, James C. Wright	95	6/94	5	4.5	no list	99
Middleton, M.A.S.H.	not given	5/95	5	3	20	85
Milwaukee, Highland	not given	6/96	3	2	15	100
North Crawford, Kickapoo River Institute	96	6/97	5	1	no list	100
Stevens Point, T.E.A.M.S.	95	8/94	5	4	no list	95
Verona, Core Knowledge	not given	1/96	5	2	75	100
Verona, New Century	not given	5/95	5	3	5	100

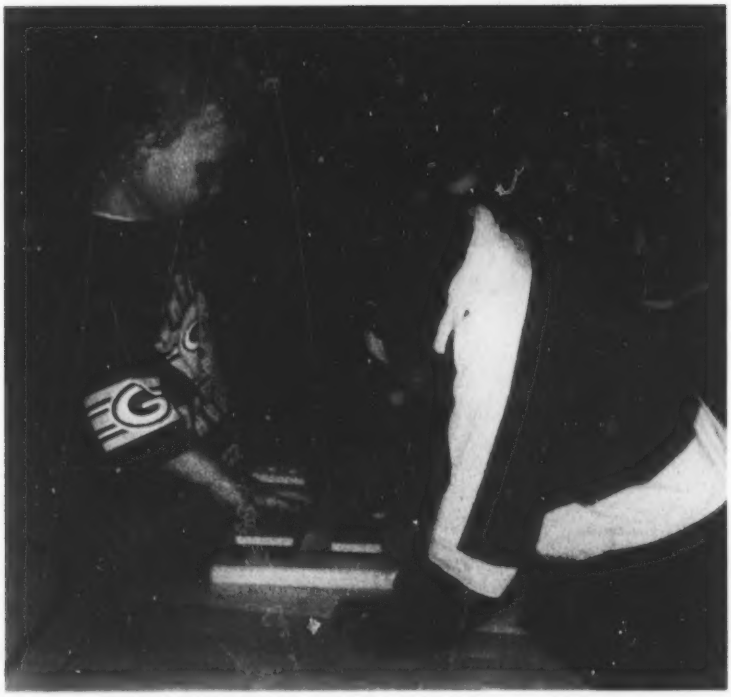
Appendixes 5

A. Wisconsin's Charter School Law

B. Teaching Requirements for Charter Schools

C. 1997 and 1998 Federal Implementation Grant Recipients

D. 1997 and 1998 Federal Planning Grant Recipients



Appendix A

Wisconsin's Charter School Law

Established 1993, Revised 1995, 1997, 1998

118.40 Charter schools.

(1) NOTICE TO STATE SUPERINTENDENT. Whenever a school board intends to establish a charter school, it shall notify the state superintendent of its intention. Whenever one of the entities under sub. (2r)(b) intends to establish a charter school, it shall notify the state superintendent of its intention by February 1 of the previous school year. A notice under this subsection shall include a description of the proposed school.

(1m)PETITION.

(a) A written petition requesting the school board to establish a charter school under this section may be filed with the school district clerk. The petition shall be signed by at least 10% of the teachers employed by the school district or by at least 50% of the teachers employed at one school of the school district.

(b) The petition shall include all of the following:

1. The name of the person who is seeking to establish the charter school.
2. The name of the person who will be in charge of the charter school and the manner in which administrative services will be provided.
3. A description of the educational program of the school.
4. The methods the school will use to enable pupils to attain the educational goals under s. 118.01.
5. The method by which pupil progress in attaining the educational goals under s. 118.01 will be measured.
6. The governance structure of the school, including the method to be followed by the school to ensure parental involvement.
7. Subject to sub. (7)(a) and (am) and ss. 118.19(1) and 121.02(1)(a)2., the qualifications that must be met by the individuals to be employed in the school.
8. The procedures that the school will follow to ensure the health and safety of the pupils.
9. The means by which the school will achieve a racial and ethnic balance among its pupils that is reflective of the school district population.
10. The requirements for admission to the school.
11. The manner in which annual audits of the financial and programmatic operations of the school will be performed.
12. The procedures for disciplining pupils.
13. The public school alternatives for pupils who reside in the school district and do not wish to attend or are not admitted to the charter school.
14. A description of the school facilities and the types and limits of the liability insurance that the school will carry.
15. The effect of the establishment of the charter school on the liability of the school district.

(2) PUBLIC HEARING; GRANTING OF PETITION.

(a) Within 30 days after receiving a petition under sub. (1m) the school board shall hold a public hearing on the petition. At the hearing, the school board shall consider the level of employee and parental support for the establishment of the charter school described in the petition and the fiscal impact of the establishment of the charter school on the school district. After the hearing, the school board may grant the petition.

(b) A school board may grant a petition that would result in the conversion of all of the public schools in the school district to charter schools if all of the following apply:

1. At least 50% of the teachers employed by the school district sign the petition.
2. The school board provides alternative public school attendance arrangements for pupils who do not wish to attend or are not admitted to a charter school.

(c) The school board of the school district operating under ch. 119 shall either grant or deny the petition within 30 days after the public hearing. If the school board of the school district operating under ch. 119 denies a petition, the person seeking to establish the charter school may, within 30 days after the denial, appeal the denial to the department. The department shall issue a decision within 30 days after receiving the appeal. The department's decision is final and not subject to judicial review under ch. 227.

(2m) SCHOOL BOARD INITIATIVE.

(a) A school board may on its own initiative contract with a person to operate a school as a charter school. The contract shall include all of the provisions specified under sub. (1m) (b) and may include other provisions agreed to by the parties.

(am) At least 30 days before entering in a contract under this subsection that would convert a private school to a charter school or that would establish a charter school that is not an instrumentality of the school district, the school board shall hold a public hearing on the contract. At the hearing, the school board shall consider the level of employee and parental support for the establishment of the charter school and the fiscal impact of the establishment of the charter school on the school district.

(b) A school board may not enter into a contract under par. (a) that would result in the conversion of all of the public schools in the school district to charter schools unless the school board complies with sub. (2)(b)2.

(2r) OTHER INITIATIVES.

(a) In this subsection:

1. "Membership" has the meaning given in s. 121.004(5).
2. "Shared cost per member" means the shared cost under s. 121.07(6)(a) divided by the school district's membership.

(b) The common council of the city of Milwaukee, the chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and the Milwaukee area technical college district board may establish by charter and operate a charter school or, on behalf of their respective entities, may initiate a contract with an individual or group to operate a school as a charter school. A charter shall include all of the provisions specified under sub. (1m)(b) 3. to 14. A contract shall include all of the provision specified under sub. (1m)(b) 1. to 14. and shall specify the effect of the establishment of the charter school on the liability of the contracting entity under this paragraph. The contract may include other provisions agreed to by the parties. The chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee may not establish or enter into a contract for the establishment of a charter school under this paragraph without the approval of the board of regents of the University of Wisconsin System.

(c) An entity under par. (b) may not establish or enter into a contract for the establishment of a charter school located outside of the school district operating under ch. 119. A pupil residing within the school district operating under ch. 119 may attend a charter school established under this subsection only if one of the following applies:

1. In the previous school year, the pupil was enrolled in the school district operating under ch. 119.
2. In the previous school year, the pupil was attending a private school under s. 119.23.
3. In the previous school year, the pupil was enrolled in grades kindergarten to 3 in a private school located in the city of Milwaukee other than under s. 119.23.
4. In the previous school year, the pupil was not enrolled in school.
5. In the previous school year, the pupil was enrolled in a charter school under this subsection.

(d) The chartering or contracting entity under par. (b) shall do all of the following:

1. Ensure that all instructional staff of charter schools under this subsection hold a license or permit to teach issued by the department.
2. Administer the examinations under ss. 118.30(1m) and 121.02(1)(r) to pupils enrolled in charter schools under this subsection.

(e) From the appropriation under s. 20.255(2)(fm), the department shall pay to the operator of the charter school an amount equal to the shared cost per member in the previous school year of the school district operating under ch. 119 multiplied by the number of pupils

attending the charter school. The department shall pay 25% of the total amount in September, 25% in December, 25% in February and 25% in June. The department shall send the check to the operator of the charter school.

(f) The department shall annually reduce the aid paid under s. 121.08 to the board of a school district operating under ch. 119 by an amount equal to the shared cost per member in the previous school year of the school district operating under ch. 119 multiplied by the number of pupils attending charter schools under this subsection.

(g) The department shall ensure that aid paid to other school districts under s. 121.08 is neither reduced nor increased as a result of the payments under par. (e) or the reduction in aid to the board under par. (f) and that the amount of the aid reduction under par. (f) lapses to the general fund.

(3) CONTRACT.

(a) If the school board grants the petition under sub. (2), the school board shall contract with the person named in the petition under sub. (1m)(b) 1. to operate the school as a charter school under this section. The contract shall include all of the provisions specified in the petition and may include other provisions agreed to by the parties.

(b) A contract under par. (a) or under subs. (2m) or (2r) may be for any term not exceeding 5 school years and may be renewed for one or more terms not exceeding 5 school years. The contract shall specify the amount to be paid to the charter school during each school year of the contract.

(c) A school board may not enter into a contract for the establishment of a charter school located outside the school district, except that if 2 or more school boards enter into an agreement under s. 66.30 to establish a charter school, the charter school shall be located within one of the school districts, and if one or more school boards enter into an agreement with the board of control of a cooperative educational service agency to establish a charter school, the charter school shall be located within the boundaries of the cooperative educational service agency. A school board may not enter into a contract that would result in the conversion of a private, sectarian school to a charter school.

(d) A school board or an entity under sub. (2r)(b) shall give preference in awarding contracts for the operation of charter schools to those charter schools that serve children at risk, as defined in s. 118.153(1)(a).

(4) CHARTER SCHOOL DUTIES AND RESTRICTIONS.

(a) *Duties.* A charter school shall do all of the following:

1. If the charter school replaces a public school in whole or in part, give preference in admission to any pupil who resides within the attendance area or former attendance area of that public school.
2. Be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices and all other operations.

(b) *Restrictions.* A charter school may not do any of the following:

1. Charge tuition.
2. Discriminate in admission or deny participation in any program or activity on the basis of a person's sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, pregnancy, marital or parental status, sexual orientation or physical, mental, emotional or learning disability.

(5) CHARTER REVOCATION. A charter may be revoked by the school board or the entity under sub. (2r)(b) that contracted with the charter school if the school board or, if applicable, the entity under sub. (2r)(b) finds that any of the following occurred:

(a) The charter school violated its contract with the school board or the entity under sub. (2r)(b).

(b) The pupils enrolled in the charter school failed to make sufficient progress toward attaining the educational goals under s. 118.01.

(c) The charter school failed to comply with generally accepted accounting standards of fiscal management.

(d) The charter school violated this section.

(6) PROGRAM VOLUNTARY. No pupil may be required to attend a charter school without his or her approval, if the pupil is an adult, or the approval of his or her parents or legal guardian, if the pupil is a minor.

(7) LEGAL STATUS: APPLICABILITY OF SCHOOL LAWS.

(a) Except as provided in par. (am), the school board of the school district in which a charter school is located shall determine whether or not the charter school is an instrumentality of the school district. If the school board determines that the charter school is an instrumentality of the school district, the school board shall employ all personnel for the charter school. If the school board determines that the charter school is not an instrumentality of the school district, the school board may not employ any personnel for the charter school.

(am)

1. Except as provided in subds. 2. and 3., if a charter school is established under sub. (2m) and located in the school district operating under ch. 119, the school board of that school district shall determine whether or not the charter school is an instrumentality of the school district. If the school board determines that a charter school is an instrumentality of the school district, the school board shall employ all personnel for the charter school. If the school board determines that a charter school is not an instrumentality of the school district, the school board may not employ any personnel for the charter school.
2. A charter school established under sub. (2r) or a private school located in the school district operating under ch. 119 that is converted to a charter school is not an instrumentality of the school district operating under ch. 119 and the school board of that school district may not employ any personnel for the charter school.
3. Not withstanding subd. 2., if the city of Milwaukee contracts with an individual or group operating for profit to operate a school as a charter school, the charter school is an instrumentality of the school district operating under ch. 119 and the board of the school district operating under ch. 119 shall employ all personnel for the charter school.

(ar) Nothing in this subsection affects the rights of personnel of a charter school that is an instrumentality of the school district in which it is located to engage in collective bargaining pursuant to subch. IV of ch. 111.

(b) Except as otherwise explicitly provided, chs. 115 to 121 do not apply to charter schools.

(8) AUDIT. The joint legislative audit committee may direct the legislative audit bureau to perform a financial and performance evaluation audit of the charter school program under this section. The legislative audit bureau shall file its report as provided under s. 13.94(1)(b) by January 1, 2000.

Section note: 1993 Acts 16, 490; 1995 Acts 27, 27s.9345(7); 1997 Acts 27, 238, 252; 1997 Act 27s.9440(2) provides that sub (2r) and related provisions take effect on July 1, 1998.

Teaching Requirements for Charter Schools

Wisconsin Administrative Code, PI 3.03(10)

(10) CHARTER SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL STAFF LICENSE AND PERMIT.

(a) Charter school instructional staff license.

1. A charter school instructional staff license may be issued to an individual who holds a valid license issued by the department and shall have the same renewal interval as the existing license. A license issued under this paragraph authorizes the holder to perform any instructional duty in a charter school established under s. 118.40, Stats.
2. The district administrator or a designated official of the employing school district may request that a license be issued under this paragraph on behalf of the individual receiving the license.

(b) Charter school instructional staff permit.

1. An individual who does not hold a current license or permit issued by the department to teach in a specific subject area or grade level or does not hold a charter school instructional staff license under par. (a) may be employed as a member of the instructional staff in a charter school if he or she obtains a charter school instructional staff permit from the department. A 1-year permit under this paragraph may be issued if all of the following apply:

   a. A district administrator or designated official of the employing school district requests the permit following a search for a qualified, licensed individual.
   b. The individual receiving the permit has a bachelor's degree in the subject that he or she is assigned to teach or in a related field, or has formal proof of mastery in a trade that he or she is assigned to teach.
   c. Except as specified under subpar. d., the individual receiving the permit receives 6 credits of training or the equivalent each school year that he or she is employed in a charter school. These credits shall be part of an approved license program in the assigned teaching area.
   d. An individual who holds a terminal degree in his or her field and who is a full time employee of an approved teacher preparation institution in Wisconsin or an individual who has formal proof of mastery in a trade and who is a full time employee of a Wisconsin technical college district board is exempt from the requirement under subpar. c.
   e. A permit holder's practice shall be coordinated, directed and inspected by a person who is licensed by the department to teach the subject or trade that the permit holder is teaching.

2. An individual may renew a permit under this paragraph if he or she meets the requirements under subd. 1.

1997 and 1998 Federal Implementation Grant Recipients

Through the federal charter school program, 12 Wisconsin charter schools received a total of $715,153 in 1997. Seventeen operating Wisconsin charter schools received a total of $976,195 in 1998.

Charter School	1997	1998	Total
Appleton Central Alternative School	$33,259	$46,800	$80,059
Beaver Dam Charter School	$70,279	$36,875	$107,154
Deerfield Charter High School	$25,460	$29,700	$55,160
McKinley Charter School, Eau Claire	$67,000	$62,750	$129,750
The Brompton School, Kenosha	NA	$21,000	$21,000
Paideia Academy, Kenosha	NA	$41,500	$41,500
School of Technology and Arts (SOTA), La Crosse	$76,888	$38,750	$115,638
School of Technology and Arts II (SOTA II), La Crosse	NA	$100,000	$100,000
Ladysmith Evening Alternative School	$59,639	$10,000	$69,639
Affiliated Alternatives, Madison	$75,252	$100,000	$175,252
James C. Wright Middle School, Madison	NA	$100,000	$100,000
Middleton Alternative High School	$61,320	$54,155	$115,475
Highland Community School, Milwaukee	$78,880	$83,415	$162,295
Kickapoo River Institute, North Crawford	NA	$58,900	$58,900
T.E.A.M.S, Stevens Point	$49,500	$37,000	$86,500
Core Knowledge Charter School, Verona	$76,162	$100,000	$176,162
New Century School, Verona	$41,514	$55,350	$96,864
TOTAL	$715,153	$976,195	$1,691,348

1997 and 1998 Federal Planning Grant Recipients

Since the beginning of the federal program to fund charter schools, Wisconsin has been able to award almost 1.4 million dollars in planning funds to 67 recipients. These funds allow recipients to explore the possibility of a charter school without requiring a commitment to establish one. Many of the planning grants awarded in 1997 and 1998 have resulted in operating charter schools.

1997 Federal Planning Grant Recipients

In January, 1997, Wisconsin awarded $258,637 to 13 proposed charter schools in its first round of planning grants.

Appleton Area School District, The Academy
A proposal to serve students in kindergarten through grade 8 and to build on a foundation of research including Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, excellence in the performing arts, distance learning and technology, and a classic core curriculum.

Kenosha Unified School District, The Brompton School
A proposal that resulted in an operating charter school offering a traditional basic skills program for children in kindergarten through grade 6. Focus is on language arts, history, geography, science, and math.

Kenosha Unified School District, Paideia Charter School Academy
Now an operating charter school for students in grades 6 through 8. Focus on block scheduling, multi-age groupings, curriculum integration, and parent and community involvement. Stresses basic math skills, complex thinking and reasoning skills, writing, communications, fine arts.

Lac du Flambeau, Ishpijise (Ojibwe word for "fly upward") School
Now operating as the Leadership Academy Charter School and serving at-risk students in grades 6, 7, and 8. Originally a proposal to serve advanced learners in all grade levels through a focus on high performance in creativity, intellectualism, artistry, and leadership.

Lancaster Community Schools, Personalized Path Program
Now operating as Lancaster Academy and serving students in grades 7-12. Focus on academic skills, personal skills, and attitudes necessary for successful life pursuits. Goal is to bring school and work together in a more meaningful way with a four-day program.

Marshall Public Schools, Dane County Transitional School
A Dane County consortium of 16 area school districts intends to implement a charter school for at-risk youth, ages 15-18, through a program that would build relationships among at-risk youth and their families.

Milwaukee Public Schools, Opportunites Industrialization Center
Students in grades 11 and 12 would participate in this program focusing on meeting high academic standards, self-discipline, respect, accountability, high self-esteem, competitive performance, interpersonal communications, stability, and personal growth.

Milwaukee Public Schools, Transcenter Charter School
A proposal to combine the efforts of three Milwaukee area sites for at-risk students, focusing on combining academics with school-to-work and social skills components.

Milwaukee Public Schools, YWCA Charter Schools
A proposal to help students in grades 4 through 8 gain the skills necessary to succeed in high school, postsecondary studies, and the world of work. Focus on careers that are nontraditional for women and people of color.

North Crawford Public Schools, Kickapoo Environmental Studies Institute
Now operating as the Kickapoo River Institute, a school with an integrated emphasis on environmental studies and the humanities for students in high school.

School District of River Falls, River Falls Charter Middle School
A proposal to teach students ages 12 to 14 emphasizing collaborative learning, community building skills, lifelong learning, strong academics, and accountability for results.

School District of Sturgeon Bay, Feasibility Study—Multi-Age Grouping K-5
A proposal for an early childhood unit, primary unit, and intermediate unit based on the research and philosophy of Elkind and Gardner and the Dimensions of Learning model.

School District of West Allis-West Milwaukee, West Allis-West Milwaukee Charter School
A proposal to meet the academic and affective needs of students in grades 7 through 9 by providing social skill development, a comprehensive therapeutic component, and access to community resources such as counseling.

1997 Supplemental Federal Planning Grant Recipients

Through the federal charter school program, 13 proposed charter schools received a total of $285,000. This became possible when the U.S. Department of Education allocated supplemental charter school funds to Wisconsin in June 1997. These awards were made in October 1997.

Unified School District of Antigo, Chrysalis Academy
A proposal to serve students in grades 1-12, and their parents, who feel they have been alienated from the traditional educational process, including those students identified for special programs such as Talented and Gifted, Title 1, At Risk, and EEN.

Fond du Lac School District, Fond du Lac Area Charter School
Now an operating charter school, this 5-district proposal established a student-operated business, the charter school being the business. Program is built on the existing school-to-work program with "skill-specific" and "holistic" apprenticeship opportunities.

Menomonie Area School District, Dunn County Alternative School
Currently operating as the Lucas Charter School for at-risk high school students, emphasizing development of academic, vocational, social, and life skills.

Milwaukee Public Schools, Advanced Learning School
Choice Educational Services proposes a company-sponsored charter school where students in grades K-12 will spend most of their time learning to read, practicing reading, and learning to use language as a foundation and means to learn all other academic subjects.

Milwaukee Public Schools, Assata High School
A proposal for an alternative high school program that links at-risk students, especially young African Americans, to the world of work through its year-round, competency-based program.

Milwaukee Pubic Schools, Central City Cyberschool of Milwaukee
A proposal to serve students from Milwaukee's inner city, ages 4 to 14, using technology as a backdrop to develop the academic, social, and leadership skills necessary for critical thinking.

Milwaukee Public Schools, Silver Spring Neighborhood Center Academy
A proposal to establish a charter school for low-income students in the Silver Spring neighborhood in grades K-8. Off-duty police officers would teach alongside certified teachers, emphasizing academic, social, and emotional growth, strong families, and strong communities.

Milwaukee Public Schools, Youth Leadership Academy
A proposal to serve socio-economically disadvantaged males in grades 3-8 emphasizing leadership development, personal accountability, social interaction, academics, communication, caring and support, high expectations, and strong families, schools, and communities.

Oconto Falls Public School District, Jefferson Alternative Learning Center
A proposal for a rural alternative high school that would seek to reconnect at-risk students to their schooling and their community.

St. Francis School District, Project Opportunity
This charter school now serves at-risk students in grades 9-12 in a year-round, learner-centered, and individually-paced program.

Sun Prairie Area School District, Charter House Middle School
This charter school would accommodate the interests, needs, learning styles, and ability levels of at-risk students in grades 6-8 through a project-oriented, hands-on learning experience.

School District of Superior, Superior Charter School
A proposed charter school for students of early childhood to primary age utilizing a curriculum based on the "brain-based learning theory," and facilitating the family's role as primary teacher.

Woodruff Joint District #1, JT Charter School
Now operating as the Nature and Technology Charter School for at-risk students in grades 6 through 8. Instruction is given in an alternative, outdoor setting that provides teacher and student learning opportunities.

1998 Federal Planning Grant Recipients

The initial 1998 federal charter school grant funded 19 proposed charter schools in 18 districts with $403,405.

Glidden School District, Glidden Charter School
Now an operating charter school that provides immediate intervention to help students who are failing in the traditional school environment. Emphasizes firm discipline, direction, caring, and mentoring. Goal is reintegration of students to the regular school.

Hudson School District, Hudson Charter School
A planned charter school for at-risk high school students that teaches life skills and core academics and fosters a strong sense of belonging through personalized plans and an integrated curriculum.

La Crosse School District, Coulee Montessori School
Now an operating Montessori school for students ages five to eight. Teacher inspires a multi-age group of children to be in charge of their own learning in an environment that is organized with materials that are sequential and self-correcting.

La Crosse School District, School of Technology and Arts III
A proposal for students in grades 9-12 that features multi-age, continuous progress classrooms, assessment by performance, customized educational planning, joint staff/parent school governance, and an arts and technology emphasis.

Marshall School District, The Fifth Dimension
A proposed rural alternative high school for at-risk students in grades 9-12 based on Wisconsin's *Framework for an Integrated Approach to Student Services* and the *Prevention and Wellness Model,* as well as current district initiatives like service learning, school-to-work, and village partnership.

Mauston School District, Mauston Alternative Charter School
Now operating as the Mauston Alternative Resource School (M.A.R.S.), an alternative school for at-risk students in grades 7-12 that features hands-on learning experiences, high expectations, and real-world life planning components.

Menomonie Area School District, Menomonie Technology School
A proposal for a charter high school where students would use technology and project-based, thematic learning as a means to mastering language arts, math, science, music, and history.

Milwaukee Public Schools, COA Charter Early Elementary School
A proposed charter school for children ages 6 to 9 using the High Scope Learning curriculum and focusing on prevention and early intervention.

Monona Grove School District, Monona Grove School-Within-A-School
Now operating as the Monona Grove Alternative High School, providing an alternative learning environment for students in grades 9-12 driven by the needs of the individual and featuring customized courses of study that have relevance and meaning to the student.

Monroe School District, Monroe Alternative High School
Now operating as the Monroe Alternative Charter School for students in grades 9-12. Aims to increase the number of students who experience success in school, graduate, work, and develop the skills and knowledge needed for post-secondary education or job placement.

Neillsville School District, Clark County Alternative School
An operating alternative high school aimed at challenging students academically, emotionally, and socially within a caring, non-coercive community of learners, and based on "best educational practices."

Oconto Falls Public School District, Spruce: A Rural Community Alternative
A proposal for a rural school of choice with multi-age classes for students in grades 1-4, emphasizing an environmental and technology theme.

Oshkosh Area School District, Oshkosh High/Middle School
A proposed alternative school for at-risk students in grades 7-10 focusing on academics, personal/social development, vocational development, and school-to-work preparation.

Plymouth School District, Charter School Planning Project
A proposed alternative school for students in grades 9-12 and beyond that would develop the student academically, socially, and vocationally through community-based activities, counseling, and work experience options.

Rhinelander School District, Rhinelander Independent Charter School
A proposed school of choice for students in grades 6-12 that would emphasize parent and community involvement, as well as a technology-based curriculum.

Salem School District No. 7, Early Childhood Prevention Program
Now operating as the Trevor Accelerated Program (T.A.P.), this school offers parents a high-quality and developmentally appropriate junior kindergarten preschool program aimed at preparing children for school without regard to income.

Stevens Point School District, The McKinley Center
A proposed charter school for students in grades K-6 that would base instruction and student success on a comprehensive model of family involvement.

Sun Prairie Area School District, The School to Life Transition School
A proposal to help at-risk youths ages 15-18 develop academic, social, emotional, and life skills through the full integration of community resources and a teacher/family collaborative curriculum model that emphasizes student ownership for achieving success.

Waupaca School District, Waupaca County Charter School
An operating multi-county collaborative effort that provides educational and treatment services to at-risk youths of high school age through academic and vocational growth and a focus on increased personal responsibility for one's decisions and behavior.

1998 Supplemental Federal Planning Grant Recipients

Through the federal charter school program, 22 proposed charter schools received a total of $406,750. This became possible when the U.S. Department of Education awarded Wisconsin supplemental charter school funds in March of 1998.

Appleton Area School District, The Classical Charter School
This proposed K-8 school for mainstream students would focus on developing strong reading skills and starting foreign language instruction in the very early grades.

Baraboo School District, Baraboo Middle School Charter School
A proposal to serve students in grades 6 through 8 who are not eligible for other EEN services. The curriculum would emphasize math and reading.

Milwaukee Public Schools, Agape Center of Academic Excellence
A proposal to use brain-based learning and multiple intelligences teaching techniques to serve primarily African American, low income, single parent families from North Milwaukee. The K4-5 curriculum emphasizes reading, writing, science, global studies, health, computer, and math.

Milwaukee Public Schools, Choice Educational Services
Education and business professionals propose a school for students in grades 1-8, emphasizing the need to read well and use language effectively.

Milwaukee Public Schools, Khamit Institute
Now an operating charter school sponsored by the city of Milwaukee. It is a private-to-charter conversion school with the mission of nurturing the creative genius of the whole child by developing confidence and self-sufficiency.

Milwaukee, United Community Center/Bruce-Guadalupe Community School
A proposed bilingual school for students in grades K-8 located in a Hispanic neighborhood in Milwaukee. Seeks to use cultural heritage as a means of strengthening personal development and promoting high academic standards, including proficiency in English.

Elkhorn Area School District, Lakes Area Building Academy
Lakeland Builders Association, along with many other community organizations and businesses, proposes to establish a charter trade academy to address their shortage of skilled labor. Program would start with eleventh- and twelfth-graders and aim to create a seamless transition to the workforce.

Elkhorn Area School District, Walworth Co. Educational Consortium Alternative High
A multi-district, multi-county proposal to serve at-risk students in 9-12 grades. Planners seek to reinvent the current program for at-risk eleventh- and twelfth-graders, and expand to serve ninth grade, tenth grade, and expelled students.

Fond du Lac School District, First Step Charter School
A proposal to provide intense interventions for children with autism, ages 3 to 8, with the goal of some integration to the mainstream.

Hamilton School District, Southeastern Wisconsin Autism Charter School
A proposal formed by parents of children with autism with a goal of making children self-sufficient through early intervention.

Janesville School District, Janesville Charter School Project
A proposal to serve the most reluctant learners, those beyond alternative and at-risk schooling, and those who may be involved with gangs, the justice system, or substance abuse.

Kenosha Unified School District, Montessori Dimensions of Learning Academy
A proposed Montessori school for children in grades K-5 that would seek to nurture students to think for themselves, research, analyze, and come to their own conclusions.

Lake Geneva School District, Badger Technical High School
A proposal to provide technical training for high school students, emphasizing real world experiences to prepare students for work in the 21st century.

Lake Geneva School District, R.E.A.L. House
A proposed middle school that would address children's different learning styles by providing an integrated curriculum and by "Reaching Every Able Learner."

Oconomowoc Area School District, Learning Opportunities
A proposed high school for at-risk students utilizing individualized learning plans and integrating support services, including mental health, family therapy, crisis intervention, and juvenile justice.

Parkview School District, Parkview Charter School
A proposed at-risk high school to engage students in strong, positive school, work, and community experiences. Emphasizes use of technology and hands-on resources to maximize integrated, applied learning and develop problem-solving and decision-making skills.

Reedsburg District Schools, RACE
A proposed school for students in grades K-5 featuring year-round education, brain-compatible education, multi-age grouping, and hands-on, experiential learning experiences.

River Falls School District, River Falls Renaissance Charter School
A proposed charter school for students in grades 6-12 that would address different learning styles through project-based, thematic instruction.

Sauk Prairie Public Schools, Charter School Planning Project
A proposal emphasizing a community of learning including parents, teachers, and students in the elementary grades. A love of learning is promoted by working closely together in a homelike environment with multi-age groupings.

University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Charter School Planning Project
A proposal for a university-sponsored charter school designed to address the needs of those students most at risk for under-realized educational potential or dropping out of school.

Waupun School District, In-District Charter School
A proposed charter school with a comprehensive plan to meet the academic and vocational needs of at-risk students in kindergarten through twelfth grade.

Wauwatosa School District, The Schoolhouse
A proposed school for students in grades K-8 that would base curricular goals on developmental and academic abilities of the individual student through a non-graded, multi-age approach to education.